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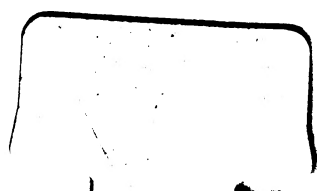
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THE NAZARENE;

OR, THE

LAST OF THE WASHINGTONS.

A REVELATION OF PHILADELPHIA, NEW YORK, AND WASHINGTON, IN THE YEAR 1844.

BY GEORGE LIPPARD.

AUTHOR OF "WASHINGTON AND HIS GENERALS," "THE QUAKER CITY;
OR, THE MONKS OF MONK HALL," "PAUL ARDENHEIM; THE
MONK OF WISSAHICKON," "BLANCHE OF BRANDYWINE,"
"LADY OF ALBARONE; OR, THE POISON GOBLET,"
"LEGENDS OF MEXICO," ETC., ETC.

"This work is by the world renowned George Lippard. His style is one peculiarly his own, vigorous and free, and he devotes his great talents to the cause of the million—to the side of Labor when opposed by capital—to the rights of the people against Monopoly—to the cause of virtue against the black sins of exalted vice—to regeneration of the social organization of the age. He has written many works which will last as enduring monuments of National Patriotism and the brightest record of American glory."—*Democratic Standard, Georgetown, Ohio.*

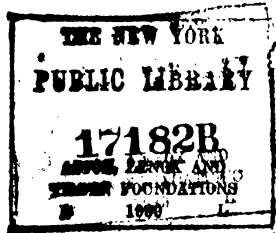
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"The delineations of certain American statesmen, in the pages of this work, have already excited an absorbing interest throughout the Union. The character of Millstone of Milastoga has startled the politicians, like a thunder-bolt from a clear sky."—*Critic's Review.*

Philadelphia:

T. B. PETERSON. No. 102 CHESTNUT STREET.



ENTERED according to Act of Congress, in the year 1854, by
T. B. PETERSON,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the Eastern District of
Pennsylvania.

TO STEPHEN GIRARD,

WHO, in the plague of 1793, and in the cholera of 1834, proved himself a sincere Disciple of Jesus, by visiting the sick, watching at the bedsides of the dying, placing the cup of cold water to the lips of the plague-smitten, without a single manifestation of fear, but with the courage of a high souled missionary in the cause of humanity.

TO STEPHEN GIRARD, THE BANKER, who in his honorable career of half a century and more, (unlike the Bankers of modern times) never once swindled the public by suspension of payments, and consequently never robbed the poor of their hard earnings, the widow and the orphan of their crust of bread.

TO STEPHEN GIRARD, THE PHILANTHROPIST, whose purse strings were never drawn, when honest industry was in want, or when a church of God was to be built, or a beneficial association was to be established.

TO STEPHEN GIRARD, THE MERCHANT AND MARINER, who, having through the long course of seventy years, made Toil honorable by an unblemished life, an untiring energy, an heroic devotion to republican principles, at last, by his rule, constituted himself the Benefactor of countless ages, by founding an institution, which in origin and effect, showed him to be at least fifty years in advance of his time, for it was marked by these great truths:

I. A SECTARIAN MINISTRY SHOULD NEVER BE ENTRUSTED WITH THE EDUCATION OF YOUTH. In the words of the will—" *I enjoin and require, that no ecclesiastic, missionary or minister of any sect whatever, shall ever hold or exercise any duty or station whatever in said college; nor shall such person ever be admitted, for any purpose or as a visitor, within the premises appropriated to the purposes of said college.*" He does this, with no intention of casting a reflection upon any sect or person. but with the sincere purpose of keeping the tender minds of orphans, from "clashing doctrines" and "sectarian controversy," until—having been instructed in benevolence, truth, sobriety and industry, they may select their religious tenets, "as their matured reason, may enable them to prefer."

II. LABOR IS HONORABLE, AND THEREFORE IT SHOULD BE EDUCATED, ELEVATED AND REFINED. For by his will, he decrees, that the orphans, who are taken into the college between the ages of six and ten, shall be thoroughly educated in science and literature, and then, between the ages of fourteen and eighteen, bound out to suitable occupations, such as agriculture, navigation, mechanical trades, arts and manufactures. Not a word is said about making these orphans members of the "learned professions." Their education is intended to elevate Labor.

III. FANATICISM IS THE MOTHER OF ALL EVILS; more to be dreaded than a foreign enemy; more to be feared than the armies of all the world combined, against our Republic. For, by his solemn injunction, he excluded, as we have seen, all Ministers from his college, impressed as he was, with the danger of that fearful disease, which Persecution in the name of Religion, entails upon the human mind.

To STEPHEN GIRARD, then, the unblemished banker, the honorable laborer, the pure Philanthropist, the Disciple of Jesus, without a creed, the Benefactor of future ages,

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED,

even as though he was yet living: for his example and memory cannot die, while there are hearts left to admire the great soul of William Penn, who founded this State, without a priest, an oath, or a blow; the moral grandeur of George Washington, who, having by his arms and genius achieved the independence of a Nation, was then willing to become the humblest citizen; the memorable will of Andrew Jackson, who, in his immortal war against the Despotism of Banks, which he carried on without flinching one inch from his course, accomplished a New Revolution for the People.

THE AUTHOR.

THE NAZARENE;
OR,
THE LAST OF THE WASHINGTONS.

BOOK FIRST.

PAUL MOUNT-LAUREL.

CHAPTER FIRST.

THE G. O. O. L. P. O.

THE uplifted torch flung its column of blood-red flame and lurid smoke, far along the darkness of that ancient chamber.

Two figures were there—one, crouching and pale, the other towering and magnificent.

The man who stood erect, near the centre of the room, with the dark aperture of an unclosed trap-door, yawning at his feet, presented a strange—a terrible image of moral and physical vigor. The torch which he held in his right hand, while his left pointed to the darkness of the aperture, flung its blood-red light over the outlines of his muscular form, half-concealed in the voluminous drapery of the cloak, falling in heavy folds along his broad chest, down to the floor.

In that blood-red light, his countenance stood out from the surrounding gloom like an image of bronze, bathed in crimson.

That high brow, widening as it arose from the cold glassy eyes, with one enormous vein bulging from its centre, its massy outlines, increased by a slight baldness near the crown, yet distinctly relieved by the hair, whose short jet-black curls were already sprinkled with silver; the nose, straight and decided with large nostrils; the wide mouth with the thin upper lip compressed against the teeth, while the lower, large and sensual, projected with an expression of peculiar meaning, the chin square, solid and substantial, as though moulded in iron—such was the countenance now reddening in the light of the uplifted torch. A cravat of snowy whiteness, which appeared above the folds of the cloak, presented a strong contrast to the dark hair and bronzed hues of this face.

No words can picture the strange magic of those large grey eyes, which cold and glassy, as the eyes of a dead man, would yet in an instant, light up with an expression that thrilled the gazer to the soul.

The figure crouching beside the opened trap-door was in grotesque contrast with the commanding form, which towered above.

Picture a slender form, with narrow shoulders angular limbs and large bony hands, crouching on the floor, with those hands nervously clasped, that form clad in a dark frock coat tarnished with mud, torn at the elbows and gathered to the throat with pins, in the place of buttons, while the up-lifted face glows in the red light of the torch.

This face is hideous.

If the other face, with its thought on the high brow, its corpse-like expression in the grey eyes, its mingled scorn and sensuality impressed on the projecting lip, at once fascinates and appals you, then his countenance strikes you with inexpressible disgust. Look once upon that countenance and you experience the same crawling sensation as when you find a snake coiled at your feet, or a snail trailing over your hand.

For this face mingles in its every outline, the Intellect of the Man, with the appetite of the Beast.

Picture a face the color of tallow, with a low bulging forehead, a nose that barely rises above the level of the cheeks, a wide mouth with lips of purple, and a receding chin, connecting itself at once, almost without the intervention of a jaw with the rude outlines of a scraggy throat. From that bulging forehead thick masses of yellow hair parted in the centre, straggled down along the cheeks to the jaw, where their tow-colored flakes are connected with some faint indications of a red beard. From the tallow hues of that face two eyes, unnatural in size, dark as jet and brilliant as a flame, glare in the light of the torch, each eye environed with a circle of unhealthy red flesh in the place of lashes, while the brows above are destitute of hair.

Such were the figures, which at the hour of midnight disturbed the silence of that lonely room.

Now bathed in the light of the flame, now darkened by its smoke, that old-time chamber presented an impressive relief to the figures grouped near its centre, beside the trap-door. The wide walls, covered with dark oaken wainscoting, eaten by worms and discolored by time, the lofty ceiling adorned with fantastic mouldings, the uncarpeted floor, on which was laid the dust of years stamped with the traces of recent footsteps, the spacious hearth, its heavy outlines bursting from the darkness; such was the ancient chamber, with the trap-door yawning in its centre.

The day had been when cheerful voices awoke the echoes of these walls, when fair faces grouped around yonder hearth in the calmness of the evening hour, when the light of the fire-side streamed warmly over the scenes of a quiet home, but now? Those days were gone; the fair faces had long

been food for the grave-worm. It was midnight; in this hall of a deserted home, flashed the red light of the Conspirator's torch.

"Mercy," cried the kneeling man, "Do not murder me, Wolfe!"

The voice in which he spoke was cracked and harsh as the tones of an eunuch, but his eyes glared with a deeper lustre, as clenching his hands together he uttered this cry.

"Why, Malachi," cried the tall figure with a sneer of biting mockery, "You seem to forget yourself, *my friend*. Murder you? Well, well, that is too good! Do you know my friend, that a single word from me will consign you to the Penitentiary for life? Come, come, I mean you no harm. Descend," he continued, pointing to the narrow stairway disclosed by the trap-door, "or do you understand—*the Penitentiary?*"

Malachi slowly arose. The poverty of his dress was more apparent as he stood erect. Torn shoes from whose many apertures his feet projected, uncovered with stockings, rents in his frock coat through which his bare skin was visible, mud on his miserable attire from head to foot—he was a pitiable spectacle, this man with the yellow hair and flaming eyes.

"Dead men tell no tales," he said in a whisper, as he quietly folded his arms across his breast.

Wolfe started. A change as sudden as it was startling passed over his face. His glassy eyes grew animate with a deep and settled light. He raised the torch yet higher, and surveyed the miserable wretch from head to foot.

"What tales have *you* to tell?" he said, in a deep whisper that well-nigh started Malachi from his feet.

"I am to be murdered; I know it," he exclaimed, trembling in every nerve, yet with a voice as calm and deliberate as it had been harsh and hurried, a moment before; "But take care, Wolfe! Do not urge a desperate man too far! What tale have I to tell? Do you not remember it? Do you not remember *the night*, twenty years ago? Yes, yes, in a month or two it will be twenty years—twenty years next July. Why look you, Wolfe, this is the very room! Ah, what mockery is this, to bring me here—here to the scene of *that night!*"

These incoherent words had a strange effect on Wolfe.

As though a bullet had stricken his right arm, it fell to his side, while the torch rolled on the floor. His head drooped slowly down, his eyes, dilated, flashing, yet vacant in their glare, were fixed upon the aperture of the trap; his muscular frame shook, even to the ends of his fingers.

Malachi observed this agitation with a hideous contortion of his purple lips. He stooped hastily to the floor, seized the smoking torch and rushed with shambling footsteps to a distant corner of the room.

"Look Wolfe," he cried, waving his hand towards his companion, whose form was seen through the darkness, rising like a statue of iron, beside the trap-door, "Look Wolfe! The bed stood in this corner. It was here you

dragged *him* forth at the dead of night, and stabbed him, ere his eyes unclosed from that fatal sleep ! Here his body lay, streaming blood along the floor, while she stood over him, begging him to awake, calling him her love, her life ; chafing his hands and pressing his cold face against her bosom. Then Wolfe she arose, and cursed you—yes, cursed you, her husband over the dead body of her lover——”

His voice died in an incoherent moan. A heavy footstep broke on his ear, and at the same moment a hand of iron clutched him by the throat.

Wolfe, pale and livid, yet towering in every inch of his stature, stood before him, gazing in his face, with eyes that burned with a madman's glare.

“Be silent cur, or I will strangle you,” he muttered, in a choking voice, as his grasp tightened around the throat of Malachi.

“Here—here you stabbed him,” groaned Malachi. “You—stand—in his—blood——”

These last words, uttered in gasping tones, with hands extended, drew the eyes of Wolfe from the face of his victim to the floor. In an instant he loosened his grasp, and seizing the torch, sank on his knees, gazing earnestly upon the oaken planks.

It was there, terrible witness of guilt and murder, that dismal blotch of dark red. Wolfe beheld it with an agitation that heaved his chest, in long deep respirations, and drove every vestige of color from his face.

“Is it not *his* blood ?” whispered Malachi, bending down and hissing the words in the ear of the kneeling man—“Did he not die on this spot ? Was not this the room ? Did not the bed stand yonder ? Ah, do you not see his body laid there, on the carpet—for then there was a rich carpet on this floor—with the dark hair hanging in masses round the bloody face ? For it was bloody, yes, crushed, mangled, ah !—you stabbed him three times, once in the heart, twice in the face, yet he was a handsome fellow. Do you not see him Wolfe ? Say, tell me, does not that blood seem to flow again, even as you look upon it ?”

The whole being of this man seemed changed by some fearful memory. He stood there, like an accusing fiend, his hands extended, his eyes glaring, his purple lips quivering with a nervous tremor and spotted with white foam.

That man of powerful frame and vigorous intellect, who now bent over the oaken planks, perusing the terrible witness of blood, made no reply to the hissing whisper of the wretch who trembled before him.

He silently arose, gathering his cloak yet more closely around his tall form, while his right hand again grasped the torch, its red light flashing over a face livid as death.

“Come !” he said in a quiet tone, motioning toward the trap-door.

“I will not—I will not follow you !” shrieked Malachi—“To be decoyed thus to this lonely house, to be murdered in the scene of your crime, to be buried in the cellar like *him*—ah, it is horrible ! I will not follow you !”

With one stride, Wolfe confronted the affrighted wretch. "What do you fear?" said he, in a low voice.

"You wish to murder me, so that I may never reveal your crime!"

"Bah! Who would believe you?" exclaimed Wolfe, in a tone of laughing scorn. "Go! You are free! Go, sirrah! Accuse *Brother* Calvin Wolfe of murder—show this red blotch—call up the bones of the dead! Who will believe you? The church—ha, ha! This white cravat would hide the stains of a thousand murders. Would you tell it to the Judges of the Court—better yet! *President* Wolfe of the FREEMAN'S BANK, can buy them all, with an—*advance on their paper!* Accuse *me* of murder, ha, ha, —my friend your wit improves!"

Malachi stood like a block of stone, utterly confounded by the words and manner of Wolfe.

"Have you no remorse?" he said, looking with an expression of horror, into the eyes of this strange man.

"Remorse? For what? *He* wronged me and *he* died. That was all. Come!" Again he beckoned to the trap-door.

"But you were agitated, Wolfe, confess it, you were horribly agitated, just now——"

"Poor Malachi!" exclaimed the Bank President, in derision. "Will you never learn this little truth: There is a wrong compared to which murder is a jest, a wrong which no years can avenge, no blood wash out!"

His tone became sad, melancholy, as he spoke this sentiment, but the last three words—'*no blood wash out,*'—was uttered with an accent of frightful despair.

"What wrong is that?" exclaimed Malachi, quickly, as he advanced a step nearer.

Wolfe pressed his hand against his brow, and muttered in a low and distinct voice, as though conversing with his own soul, these memorable words:

"THE WRONG INFLICTED BY A MOTHER, WHO RENDERS DOUBTFUL THE LEGITIMACY OF HER CHILD.

Come," he cried, suddenly starting from his reverie, "Let us end this farce. You have sold yourself to me. You know the price. I want to use, not murder you. Come, Malachi—take my hand and follow me."

He inserted the torch in a hook, which projected from the wainscot, and then quietly unwound his white cravat.

"Come, Malachi, you must consent to wear this about your eyes, for a few moments. Nay, do not look so chap-fallen! No harm shall befall you. Bless me, how well you look! A rope about your neck and the picture would be complete."

Taking the blindfolded man by the hand, he silently led him toward the strairway, revealed by the unclosing of the trap-door. In a moment they had disappeared, the door was closed by a hand, which appeared through the aperture, and the old room was left to its silence and dust once more.

The torch flung its volume of smoke and flame along the wall, now veiling the place in shadow, now bathing it in a wild and uncertain light. A stillness like the tomb, rested upon that ancient chamber. In fine, a nervous man, standing there alone, in that midnight hour, would not have dared to look over his shoulder, for fear some ghastly face might start from the wainscot, some hideous dead man's visage, glare from the darkness of the fireplace.

Soon however, a sound was heard like the opening of a door, and from the dimness of the farthest corner of the chamber, a strange form, slowly and with softened footsteps, approached the light.

It was the form of a young man, about the middle height, broad across the shoulders, slender in the waist, graceful and muscular in each finely proportioned limb. From head to foot, he was clad in deep black, relieved only by a snow-white collar, which falling aside from the throat threw his face boldly into light.

He came cautiously along the floor, now inclining his head to one side as he paused to listen for the faintest sound, now gazing upon the foot-prints at his feet, now looking with wonder at the blazing torch.

At last he stood beneath the glare of the light, with his arms folded across his breast, while his brow grew dark with thought.

At this moment, as with his profile relieved by the darkness of the room, he stood absorbed in strange memories, the light streamed over his olive countenance, revealing the noble outline of that lofty brow, the severe contour of that nose, the delicate beauty of that mouth, whose red lips curving at times with scorn were now compressed with emotion, the iron resolution of that rounded chin, which with the lower part of the face expressed the full power of a giant will.

The eyes of this olive countenance, gleaming from beneath arching brows were large, dark, and intensely lustrous. The hair dark brown in hue, fell back from the bold forehead in short thick masses.

Altogether it was a singular face; singular for its deep and passionate beauty, for the great soul gleaming from those earnest eyes, for the remarkable associations connected with its every outline.

For remarkable associations rushed upon you, as you beheld that face. The thought that you had seen something like it, either in real life or in some glowing picture, or some chiseled statue of the olden time. The thought of a high destiny written in that brow, or a lofty lineage stamped in those outlines, which mingled the wild beauty of an Arab chief with the softer traits of the European crusader.

In fact it was a face, combining in one view the prominent points of two noble races; the Frank and the Saracen of the middle ages; the beauty of one, the fierce passionate energy of the other.

"It may prove but a dream, after all!" muttered the young man, "It is true I have hoped for years. It is true amid all the bitterness of poverty and neglect, a wild presentiment of the future—a golden future when these

dark mysteries should all be explained—has come to me by night and day, like an angel sent from God. And now these hopes are about to be fulfilled, or crushed forever. And now in this very crisis of my fate, I am afraid to go on—I hesitate, when to falter is to be lost!”

He drew from his vest a strip of moth-eaten parchment, on whose faded surface certain words were traced in a bold vigorous hand. As he gazes upon this parchment, with his deep earnest eyes examining the shape of each letter, the very punctuation marks and the name traced at the bottom let us look over his shoulder and peruse these mysterious syllables.

WOLFEDEN, MAY 1, 1822.

TO JEAN BAPTISTE GOBERT, IN CASE AN ACCIDENT SHOULD BEFAL ME.

The CHILD is now one year old.

On the 1st. of May, 1844, he will have attained the age of Twenty-Two years. On that day, deliver to him this Parchment; I charge you by your oath to me, by your love for his Father. Should death overtake you before that period, then alas! Our hopes are vain; the destiny of the CHILD is lost.

These words are for that Child, when he shall have attained the age of twenty-two: LEON, the house in which I write is situated in a wood, two hundred yards from the public road. *In the northern room, on the first floor, third panel from the fire-place—there is concealed your Fate.*

V. ST. P. DE ST. H.

“This is the house,” muttered the young man, without removing his glance from the parchment, “But those men, whom I saw entering the shutter, on the right of the hall-door, whom I tracked to this chamber—where are they now? Who are they? What object calls them to this deserted house, at this lonely hour? Can they have any connection with the Fate of the poor orphan, so mysteriously concealed in this old chamber?”

As he spoke he drew a silver-hilted dagger from his vest, and seized the torch with his left hand. Then advancing toward the fire-place he sounded each panel of the wainscot with the hilt of the dagger. An expression of disappointment and chagrin passed over his handsome features. Each panel returned a dull and deadened sound.

“It may be on the other side of the fire-place!” he exclaimed, as a gleam of hope again shot from his dark eyes.

He passed the fire-place and torch in hand examined the structure of the wainscoting with an anxious eye. Between the fire-place and the wall nine panels extended, each rising from the floor to the ceiling in one solid piece of oak. These panels were curiously carved with various grotesque images, here a hideous face, appearing among wreaths of flowers, there a cluster of grapes, encircling the brow of a satyr, while farther on, a laughing nymph led old Bacchus by a chain of roses. The third panel from the fire-

place presented a plain surface of oak, varied in the centre by the device of a goblet crowned with grapes and lilies.

The young man's eye rested upon this panel, and his face became pale. He advanced, trembling in every nerve and struck the goblet with the dagger. It returned a hollow sound, as though it concealed some crevice in the wall.

For a moment that young man stood silent and pale, while his manly face betrayed every change of emotion, from the vivid flush of hope, to the corpse-like pallor of despair.

At last, as if gathering courage for the effort, he struck the panel again, when he observed a small crevice near the foot of the goblet. In this crevice he inserted the point of his dagger, when a small space of the panel, nearly twelve inches square, comprising the part on which the goblet and flowers were carved, separated from the rest, and opened like a door. A small hollow space, cut into the solid wall, was laid open to the glare of the torch.

With hope, fear, joy and anxiety quivering over every feature, the young man hastily examined this nook, and drew forth a strip of parchment, similar to the one which he grasped in his hand. Moth-eaten, stained by time, and covered with dust, it bore these simple words, to all appearance written by the same hand which had penned the other :

TO LEON.

In the centre of the hearth, near the wall, place the torch. Half-way on the edge of the shadow to the right, you will find the trap-door. Descend into the vault below, and place the light in the centre. Dig in the shadow to the right.

V. ST. P. DE ST. H.

"Ah, this is mockery!" groaned the young man, crushing the parchment between his fingers. "I am the dupe of enigmas, the toy of shadows!"

All at once, his hopes seemed to have forsaken him. He stood there, beside the wall, with the torchlight falling over his massive forehead, now stamped with all the gloom of a blighted hope. His name, his fortune, nay his life, was wound up in the result of this search, and now, in answer to his ardent toil, he grasped this parchment of enigmas.

"One more trial," he said, at last, "If that fails I am lost!"

He inserted the torch in a crevice of the fireplace, near the rear wall. You will understand, that as this fireplace projected from the wainscoting some two feet toward the centre of the room, a light placed within its side walls, would only illumine a part of the chamber, somewhat in the shape of a triangle, leaving the rest enshrouded in darkness.

The torch cast two well-defined masses of shadow, to the right and left of the fireplace.

Leon advanced along the edge of the shadow to the right, listening in-

tently for the welcome sound, which would indicate the trap-door. At last a hollow echo replied to his footstep. He stood for a moment like a statue, and then bending down, beheld the outlines of the trap-door, with the marks of footsteps all around.

One vigorous movement of his fingers, and the trap-door was opened; while the darkness of the secret stairway yawned once again in the centre of the floor.

"Ah, it is no enigma! It is indeed a Revelation of the Secret of my life!" gasped Leon, as overwhelmed by the joy of the moment, he remained on his knees, gazing vacantly into the void below. He felt his heart swell within his bosom, while his blood flowed through his veins like living-fire. All fear of discovery, all doubt, all hesitation was gone.

His face was radiant with delight, as rising from his knees, he grasped the torch and advanced toward the trap-door again. In a moment he was gone, yes, down thirteen narrow steps of stone, with the torch flaring above his head.

The place in which he stood, was marked by certain singular features.

The light revealed a vaulted cellar, some twelve feet square, with floor of hard clay, and walls of massive stone. The arching roof was built of substantial masses of brick. Opposite the foot of the stairway was a small door, fashioned in the walls, evidently the entrance of a secret passage. As the torch flashed over this door, Leon examined it with a careful eye. It was formed of solid iron, and fastened from the other side.

From the wall to the right of the stairway, a mass of brick, reaching from the hard floor to the arching ceiling, projected for the space of one foot, while it was two feet in width. Leon passed around the vault, examining the structure of the stairway, which arising from the floor, was supported in the rear by a pillar of iron; the details of the iron door; each brick of the mass which projected from the wall, were surveyed with an anxious gaze.

"This pillar of iron is in the centre of the vault," he muttered, as he placed the torch in a small hole, which he first made in the hard clay with his dagger. "Ah, the parchment is no enigma! Behold—the light casts a small shadow on either side of that mass of brick. In the shadow to the right lies the Revelation of my Fate!"

He reached that mass of shadow in three hurried strides, and with the point of his dagger drew a line along its edge, marking its extent. Then grasping the torch again, he bent down over the spot, gazing, with dilating eyes, upon that small triangle of hard clay, in which his Destiny was buried.

The cold sweat stood out upon his brow.

With the point of his dagger he commenced removing the earth, scattering its hard lumps along the surface of the cellar. That was a muscular right arm, yet it trembled like the palsied limb of an aged man. Not with weak-

ness, not with fear, but an anxiety, a suspense that shook his whole frame. as though he was struggling for his life, with some mortal disease.

Faster and faster the lumps of earth fell around him, while the torch, grasped in his left hand, cast its light over his noble forehead, now glittering with drops of moisture, over the widening cavity, which was to fulfil his hopes, or blast them forever.

That dagger was but a poor substitute for a spade, yet he grasped it with a clutch of iron, and whirled the clumps of earth, one after the other, each as hard as stone, into the darkness around him.

At last—ah, then he shook like a withered reed—at last the dagger's point encountered an object harder than clay, an object which returned a ringing sound.

Soon he uncovered that object, cleared the earth from its sides, and while his eyes shone with a strange lustre, yes while they dilated and burned with all the passion of a lover, when his beloved whispers, Yes ! he drew forth from that cavity, a small chest or casket of iron, secured with a padlock and encrusted with the rust of years.

"Here it is at last !" he cried, with a frenzied shriek of joy. "At last I have found it, at last my toil is repaid, at last I stand upon the threshold of that fearful secret ! For years I have endured cold, hunger, neglect, despair—all, all that is written in those terrible words, Poverty and Orphanage. I have made my bed upon the hard earth, shivered in my rags in the winter's cold, starved on in my rude garret, while my fingers froze to the volume which I read. Beaten as a child, trampled upon as a boy, neglected as a man, and all—not because I was criminal, not because I ever harmed a human thing,—no, no ! But on account of those terrible words, which the upstart and the imbecile saw written on my brow—"I AM POOR !" Now—Oh, my heart will burst ! Now this beaten child, this trampled boy, this neglected man, will at last—know his Father's name !"

These broken ejaculations may appear somewhat incoherent, but there was a wild eloquence flushing along that brow, an overwhelming joy, shooting from those dark eyes, a passion quivering in every accent of that broken yet musical voice, which no power of language can describe.

Indeed that strange Leon, bending over the iron casket with extended hands, aroused the echoes of the vault with bursts of hollow laughter. Then clasping his hands he raised his face and thanked God, for the deep enjoyment of that hour.

"The key to this casket is lost," he exclaimed, after a few moments of calm thought, "But I can force the lock with the point of my dagger."

The words had not passed his lips, when a new object fixed his attention. It was a hard substance, projecting into one side of the cavity which he had made. With a few brief strokes of the dagger he widened the cavity, and the object in all its hideous reality lay before his eyes.

It was a human skull, with a single lock of dark hair encrusted with earth, adhering to its surface.

"It is the skull of a murdered man!" the thought rushed upon the brain of Leon, who was utterly confounded by this new mystery, "Yet who buried it here, beside the iron casket? Was the murderer conscious of the vicinity of this treasure? Or——the thought is horrible——was the casket buried with the body of the murdered man?"

To these involuntary questions flashing over his soul, as the skull lay before him its cold, white surface crimsoned by the light of the torch, there was no answer.

The fatal secret had been buried with the dead.

With the point of his dagger, Leon forced the small brass lock, the lid unclosed with a harsh grating sound, and the mystery of the casket lay open to his gaze.

It lay open to his gaze, but as yet he dared not look within.

He knelt there on the hard clay, his hands touching the casket, while his large dark eyes were uplifted in voiceless prayer.

At last he gathered courage; while a slight tremor agitated his frame he gazed upon the secret of his life, the mystery of the iron casket.

It now becomes our task to follow the footsteps of Wolfe and his companion, Malachi.

Blindfolded and in darkness he was led by the hand of Wolfe down thirteen steps of stone. For a moment he stood still, while the sound of a door creaking on its hinges, grated on his ears. The door was closed again as Wolfe whispered the command, "Advance!" Then this nervous wretch assailed at once by the dampness of the subterranean atmosphere, and his own vague anticipations of evil, was led forward along a paved passage. By the echo which redoubled the sound of his trembling footsteps, he knew that it was a narrow passage, overarched by a vaulted roof. All the while his hand was clenched in the iron grasp of Wolfe; not a word was spoken, not a sound save the echo of their footsteps was heard. Malachi counted one hundred and nine paces, as he advanced in a straight line.

But soon the path became difficult and tortuous. Now turning to the right, now to the left, now ascending an inclined plane, whose rough stones bruised his feet, now lifted by the strong grasp of Wolfe from one rock to another, Malachi soon found what little courage he possessed, departing from him, like ice before a flame. He shivered with cold and fear.

"Wolfe—do not murder me!" he gasped, clutching the arm of his guide with trembling fingers.

No answer greeted his quivering supplication.

All at once he found himself placed in a sitting posture, with his cold hands laid on his knees, which he locked together with fear.

"You may remove the bandage," said a hollow voice, which seemed to resound from a great distance.

Malachi tore the white cravat from his eyes, looked wildly around and then veiled his gaze with his trembling hands.

It must be confessed, that the circumstances under which he found himself placed, were calculated to strike a more courageous heart than his, with horror.

A trembling light fell on his head from the ceiling of an apartment, not more than ten feet square. The walls, the ceiling, the floor of this closet, were all of ebony blackness. He was seated upon a coffin, with that dim unearthly light falling around him, steeping this gloomy cell in a deeper gloom. Such was the spectacle that greeted his unclosing eyes.

Tremblingly he removed his hands from his face, and glanced around. What new wonder was this? Those walls trembled, fluttered, waved slowly to and fro; nay, the ceiling itself moved with a quivering motion! This wonder was presently explained, even to the confused intellect of Malachi, for the four walls with the ceiling above, were formed by thick folds of black cloth, which was emblazoned with strange mottoes in letters of gold.

He gazed before him, and these words, flashing from a black ground in that dim light, glared him in the face:

TO BETRAY THE L. P. O., IS TO DIE!

He turned to the right:

THOU HAST NOW TAKEN THE FIRST STEP IN OUR HOLY WORK—TURN BACK, AND THOU ART LOST!

He cast his gaze to the left:

THE GRAVE HIDES THE SECRETS OF THE L. P. O!

Then starting from the coffin, his large eyes now flashing with unearthly light, were fixed upon the curtain at his back:

SWEAR! WILT THOU FIGHT FOR THE HOLY WORK! SWEAR!

The wretch sank shivering back upon the coffin. There was something in this spectacle terrible and grotesque, as a nightmare dream. That dim light falling over a face hideous at all times, but now unearthly almost demoniac in its expression, the large black eyes framed in red circles and flashing out from beneath the bulging brow, from which long masses of yellow hair dangled to the throat, the purple lips, now changed to livid white, the tallow-hue of the skin, now transformed in a dull ashy blue—this was a horrible face to see at any time, even in broad noonday, but now at dead of night, surrounded by four dreary curtains, with all the anguish of a guilty and cowardly soul stamped upon every feature, it was like one of those spectre visages gleaming upon the poor maniac from the shadows of his cell.

"Ah, I am in his power," groaned Malachi, between his teeth, "But he shall pay for it all! Yes, by Judas, if I have to track him fifty years, and strike him over my father's grave!"

At this moment the curtains which formed the walls of the apartment, slowly arose, and disappeared in the gloom. That which had been a ceiling was now a canopy, with the same dim light still shining from its centre.

Malachi gazed around, with a glare of stupefied horror.

The coffin on which he rested was placed in the centre of a large and sepulchral hall, whose walls and ceiling were lost in gloom. The faint light above his head served only to reveal a mass of shadows, who were seated side by side, their faces and forms veiled in flowing robes of midnight blackness.

As Malachi's vision became more accustomed to the gloom, he could distinguish one figure, towering above all others, seated on a platform some few paces from the coffin. Through the folds of this figure's robe Malachi thought he could discern the outlines of a human form.

There was something terribly grand and spectral in this scene. On every side were Shadows, bearing some faint resemblance to human forms, it is true, yet still Shadows whose dark outlines were lost in the pale blue light that struggled through the gloom.

"Wouldst thou become a Brother of our Holy Order?" spoke a deep sonorous voice, which seemed to proceed from the Figure on the Platform.

Malachi gazed around in astonishment and awe, when suddenly a veiled figure stood by his side, the outlines of its head and arms and body but dimly revealed by the folds of the dark robe which enshrouded it.

"Answer the Most venerable Grand Master of the Grand Chapter of the L. P. O.," whispered the veiled figure, in a voice slightly tintured with the Irish brogue. The answer is "I would, Most venerable Grand Master!"

"I would most venerable Grand Master!" echoed Malachi.

The gloom, rendered deeper by the faint light, the silence unbroken by a footfall began to deaden the heart of Malachi with a strange stupor. He stood with his eyes dilating, as they roved wildly from side to side, while his knees knocked together like dry sticks, shaken by the wind.

"It is well," answered the deep measured voice, which came from him who was called Grand Master. "Brother of the Thrice Holy Degree—advance, and lead this Candidate to the Tabernacle of Meditation!"

Two shadows separated themselves from the dark mass, and advancing along the open space, which lay between Malachi and this strange brotherhood, they silently extended their hands and led him from the light.

Malachi, attended by these Brothers of the Thrice Holy Degree, passed through long lines of veiled figures, and presently stood before a narrow door which was fashioned in a lofty wall. He could discern the outlines of the door-frame, but all around was wrapt in that same vague gloom which sank like some horrible spell upon his soul.

"Lo! The door of the Tabernacle!" spoke one of the Brothers, who grasped Malachi by the right hand; "Enter Candidate and learn the first mystery of our order!"

"Enter!" said the other Brother, "Take three steps to the right, and then three to the left!"

Malachi pressed against the narrow door, and crossed the threshold of the Tabernacle. At the same moment the door closed behind him, and he stood in utter darkness. He could not see his hands before his eyes.

Here let us at once confess, that we are in no way responsible for the loathsome rites of this secret band. It is with no desire to satisfy the cravings of a morbid curiosity, that we lay bare their revolting ceremonies, or picture their blasphemous orgies. It is with the express intention of showing how man may be influenced by a secret association, whose rites are as loathsome as detestable, whose symbols are a blasphemy on God, a libel on his creatures, that we follow this scene to the end.

Malachi stood in utter darkness, his hands folded over his breast. For a moment the thought of escape flashed over his mind, but the next instant he felt the utter hopelessness of his situation. He resolved to obey his mysterious guides.

First he advanced three steps to his right, and then turning he measured three steps to the left. He extended his hand, a cold shudder, an irrepressible awe thrilled through his frame.

At the same moment a bright light flashed through the darkness of the room in which he stood, and there—not one foot before him—almost touching his face, was placed the body of a dead man, supported in an erect position against the wall, the grave-clothes on its limbs, its right hand pressed against his own, while all the livid hues of corruption were spread over its crumbling countenance, and the earth-worm went crawling over its brow.

This was no fiction, no dream, but a palpable hideous reality.

There it stood, with its shrouded limbs, erect and ghastly; with its horrible eyeballs from which the lids had fallen away, glaring in the light, with the lips parted from the white teeth, in mocking smile; there, before him, gazing upon him, touching him with its cold hand, there, distinctly relieved by the dark wall it stood—this hideous carcase which had once been a Living Soul.

The taint of Death filled the air; the atmosphere of that small room with its dark walls and glaring light was like the breath of a charnel.

Malachi uttered one long, piercing cry of horror, and started back from the appalling sight, his hideous face stamped with an expression that no painter could depict.

As he started back, the light was gone; he was in darkness again, but darkness with the festering corse—ah!

"I will bear it no longer!" he shrieked running from side to side, in the effort to find the door. "I will bear this mockery no more—you may im-

prison me—cut me—carve me—murder me—but this trampling on my reason, this crushing of my soul, with your sights of mockery—I will bear it no more! I swear it by my father's soul! I swear it by Judas!"

It was a singular fact in the philosophy of Atheism, that this poor wretch, who outcast as he was, from the society in which he had once shone, a rich and of course respected man, now in his poverty and degradation, yet clung to his pitiable sophistry, the denial of a God, and for the want of a better oath to swear by, conjured his father's soul with the name of "JUDAS!" Whenever Malachi linked these names together, there was danger in his coward soul.

As he ran from side to side, seeking madly for the door, he plunged against the corpse, and struck it in his rage. The blow disengaged it from the wall; it fell forward crushing the poor wretch to the floor. Its face, festering with pollution was laid against his own, its cold breast silenced the beatings of his heart, the overwhelming taint which came from its decaying limbs, stifled his breath. He made an effort to rise, but in his haste and madness fell back once more upon the floor. A wild fancy now seized him; he imagined that the dead man, filled with a strange life, was endeavoring to throttle him.

"Ah—" he shrieked. "You would strangle me, would you—ah!"

Now striking the clammy face, now leaping on the breast, now tearing the shroud from the body, piece by piece, Malachi continued this loathsome scene, by raising the head in his hands and then with all his strength dashing it madly on the floor.

Here his strength failed him. He tottered and fell motionless beside the corpse

"Ah—where am I?" he exclaimed, again unclosing his eyes. "This same gloomy hall—these same shadows—ah! The hideous dream is not yet over."

Supported by the arms of two veiled figures, he stood in the wide hall once again.

The disgusting ritual of blasphemy was again resumed.

"What lesson didst thou learn in the Tabernacle of Meditation?" spoke the hollow tones of the figure on the Platform.

Guided by the whispers of the figure at his side, Malachi faltered the response:

"O most venerable Grand Master, I learned the doom of the man who betrays the secrets of the L. P. O.!"

"What is the nature of that Doom?"

"Death in the street or in the home, in the church or in the field, whenever the vengeance of the L. P. O. overtakes the faithless Brother!"

"One more trial remains," again spoke that hollow voice; "What object dost thou love, O, child of clay? Is it a wife or a mother, a brother or a sister whom thou dost hold most dear?"

A frightful grimace agitated the face of Malachi; his lips curled in mockery, while his dark eyes flashed with unusual fire.

"What object do I love?" he muttered. "That is too good!"

There was something terrible in the cold mockery of his tone. It implied that he was an outcast from a mother's blessing, a father's love; a blasphemer of all those ties which render hallowed the hearth of home, or lift man nearer to his God.

"Wouldst thou sacrifice a father, a wife, a mother, a sister or a brother, in case the L. P. O. doomed them to die?"

This time Malachi needed no prompter.

"I would!" he screeched, in a voice that made the veiled figures who held him, start from his touch.

"Then enter the Chamber of the Last Trial! Perform thy duty without fear, and the L. P. O. will hail thee as a Brother!"

Led by the veiled figures, Malachi passed along the hall, in an opposite direction from the Tabernacle of Meditation. Those shadowy forms on either side still preserved their strange silence; not a motion was perceptible, a sound could not be heard. In a moment Malachi stood before a narrow door, fashioned like the other in the high wall of the gloomy chamber.

"Enter this door—advance two steps—and strike with this dagger!" whispered the figure on his right.

Armed with the courage of despair, Malachi grasped the dagger, pushed open the door and stood in darkness.

All was still; he could hear the beatings of his heart. Yet his foot pressed a carpeted floor; his senses were cheered by a delicious perfume.

He advanced two steps forward, and struck with all the vigor of his arm.

As his blow descended, a vivid light illumined the place, revealing the details of a luxuriously furnished chamber. Malachi uttered a howl, more of surprise than horror. His heart steeled as it was to every crime, was not proof against the terrible surprise which flashed upon him, as the sudden light almost blinded his eyes.

His dagger had descended into the heart of a beautiful woman, who lay reclining on a sofa, with loose drapery flowing around the outlines of her lovely form. The point of the knife had pierced the alabaster skin, between the uncovered breasts, and the blood spouted forth over the Murderer's hands. She had been stricken in her sleep, for now she started up with extended arms, while her dark eyes rolled with a wandering glare, and her long black tresses fell in wild disorder over her white shoulders.

The dagger was there—deep sunken in the wound—while the blood stained the surface of the bosom and crimsoned the Murderer's stiffened fingers.

For a moment Malachi beheld this sight, and then all was darkness. While the wild wandering look, the last terrible glance of the dying woman, —with the blood-stained bosom, and dark hair floating along the white should-

etc.—flashed like a Phantom from the other world before his imagination, he was seized by invisible hands and borne from the room.

He stood in front of the Platform once again, with the blood-red dagger dripping in his right hand.

But that wide and lofty hall was filled with light, yes, the light of an hundred torches, whose pure flames united in one brilliant radiance, more beautiful than moonlight, more gorgeous than day.

No longer veiled in long dark robes, the Brethren of the L. P. O. sate there, circle beyond circle, rank after rank, their breasts blazing with gorgeous Regalia, while each right hand raised aloft the pale blue torch. Above their heads extended the ceiling, one mass of glittering emblems, fashioned in gilded mouldings, and shining in the light like living gold.

Alone in his dark robes, the Grand Master still sate enthroned on the platform, his face and form veiled in midnight black. The platform itself was covered with black velvet, while from the chair of office to the ceiling, arose an immense curtain of purple, with these letters emblazoned on its folds:—

THE GRAND CHAPTER
OF THE
G. O. O. L. P. O.

It must be confessed that there was a strange, an impressive grandeur in this scene.

The figure of Malachi, alone in the centre of that lighted hall, his white robes, dabbled in blood, the knife dripping in his hand, while the solemn platform of the Grand Master arose on his right, and the circles of the brethren swept around, each rank defined by its array of torches, smitting a pale blue flame, which was mirrored again in the regalia flashing from each breast—it was a magnificent scene, deepened in its effect by the dead silence which prevailed, the statue-like immovability of each form, the lofty height of the ceiling and the wide extent of the hall.

There was one circumstance, however, which mingled the grotesque with the sublime. The robes had indeed fallen from every form, save the Grand Master's, but each face, save his alone, was concealed beneath a hideous mask. Here a row of death's-heads glared in the light; there a circle of grinning faces, with large eyes of colored glass; on one side a visage without a nose, on the other a countenance with a single eye, gleaming from the centre of the forehead; and thus through the entire extent of that Secret chamber, not one uncovered face was seen.

Malachi, his hands red with blood, his uplifted knife dripping on his white robe, stood stricken dumb by this scene.

"What next?" he shrieked, tossing the knife aloft. "What new horror am I to pass through—speak! Calvin Wolfe I am ready for your worst—bid me murder a sleeping child, and I will do it!"

"Poor child of mortality," spoke the voice of the Grand Master, deep-

toned and sonorous, yet unnatural in its tones ; "Why dost thou mention that name in the Grand Chapter of the L. P. O. ? No names are known here ; he that crosses yonder threshold must forget his own name !"

There was silence for a moment, and then the Grand Master resumed :

"Dost thou receive the lesson which the Chamber of Trial teaches thee ?"

Malachi's right arm fell to his side, while the dripping knife was lost for the moment, in the folds of his dress. The remembrance of that scene, chilled him, even yet, with inexpressible awe.

Two brethren advanced to his side, their faces concealed beneath the death's-head mask, while over each breast depended a collar of dark rich velvet, glittering with golden symbols. Around each waist was tied an apron of white doe-skin, emblazoned with a golden axe and the letters L. P. O.

"Answer the most venerable Grand Master," whispered the Brother on the right, and then in the same low voice, he communicated the response.

"I do receive the lesson taught to me by the Chamber of Trial," answered Malachi ; "It is the duty of the L. P. O. to sacrifice the object most dear to his heart, in case his Superior commands the deed. Not the grey hairs of a father, not the smile of a mother, not the soft bosom of a wife or the fond arms of a sister, may turn back or delay the vengeance of the L. P. O. !"

"It is well ! Let the Oath be administered !"

In a few moments a small altar was reared in front of the Platform, and covered with glossy folds of dark velvet. A massive book, with golden clasps and gorgeous cover, was laid upon the surface of this altar ; while another Brother, also wearing the Death's-head mask, but clad in flowing robes, whose heavy folds mingled velvet and lace, purple and gold, advanced and stood before the Platform.

"O, Most Worshipful High Priest, administer the Oath to the Candidate !" spoke the sonorous voice of the Grand Master.

"At least," whispered Malachi, with a look of demoniac scorn, "Take that *thing* away !"

He pointed to the book with golden clasps. His whisper thrilled through the hearts of all who heard it. For that book, so fearfully desecrated by these men, who assembled at the midnight hour, to celebrate their blasphemous orgies, was the Holy Bible.

"Swear me by *something* in which I believe ?" screeched Malachi, pointing with his dagger to the holy book, "By my father's soul or by Judas—but that thing—bah ! Do I look as if I believed in *that* ?"

As one man, the whole brotherhood, torches in hand and masks on their faces, started to their feet. A wild murmur filled the hall. Ominous cries, low whispers, deep-toned threats, arose on every side.

Malachi looked around with a frightened glance. "Dog !" whispered the High Priest, from his mask, "Dare you blaspheme in the presence of the L. P. O. ?"

The clear, deep tones of the Grand Master were now heard above all other sounds :

"Let there be silence in the Grand Chapter !" he exclaimed ; " O, Most Worshipful High Priest, administer the Oath !"

All was silent again ; the brethren resumed their seats once more, and the High Priest laid his hand on the Bible.

"Laying thy hand on this holy book, dost thou take this Oath—I swear to be faithful to the HOLY WORK of the L. P. O. ! And if I fail in this, or disobey my superiors, or reveal the secrets of the L. P. O., may sudden vengeance overtake me ; may * * * * my body * * above ground, * * * * my soul * * lost forever * * * and may * * * * * such be my doom, if I become unfaithful to the L. P. O. !" Dost thou take this solemn vow ?"

"I do !" exclaimed Malachi, as the words of this loathsome oath sounded in his ears.

"Brothers of the G. C. of the L. P. O. !" exclaimed the Grand Master, "Do ye witness this vow ?"

"We do !" was the response from an hundred throats.

"Then I proclaim thee a Brother of the G. C. of the L. P. O., thyself entitled to the Honorable title "L. P. O.," now and forever !"

The High Priest as he spoke, took the dagger from the hand of Malachi, and laid it on the altar.

"Advance, and salute the Grand Master !" he said, as he took the new brother by the hand and led him up the three steps of the platform.

Malachi knelt before the veiled figure, when a gloved hand was extended from those dark robes, glittering with a massive ring on the third finger.

"Behold this ring formed of gold, with the letter L. P. O. set in precious stones," exclaimed the High Priest ; "Examine it well, for by thy Oath thou art bound to obey the hand that wears this ring, even to the death. This is thy first duty in our holy order ! The Grand Master of the L. P. O. thou canst never know, but by this ring. His face is never visible to the brethren. He is elected by the Brothers of the Thrice Holy Degree, who are sworn to keep sacred his name, from all eyes and ears, neither to write nor speak it on peril of the Doom. Know Brother that if thou art faithful thou mayst in time wear the regalia of the Sacred, the Holy and Thrice Holy Degrees ; yea, in time thou mayst even fill this most venerable chair ! —Brothers, let there be silence in the Grand Chapter, for the Most venerable Grand Master would deliver the Charge on the Holy Work of the L. P. O. !"

All was silent in the hall. The High Priest in his imposing robes retired backward from the platform, while Malachi in white robes stained with blood, knelt before the Grand Master.

The torches emitted their pale blue light, revealing the glitter of symbols

and insignia, the hideous contrast of the masked faces, the lofty ceiling and the dark platform.

All was silent as death.

Veiled from head to foot, his robes displaying by their folds the outlines of a muscular form, the Grand Master slowly arose from his chair, and stood with his hands extended, over the kneeling man.

Then—while his imposing height gave a wild grandeur to his appearance—in a voice deep-tened, deliberate and hollow, he slowly pronounced the words of the Charge.

“I charge thee, Brother, be faithful to the Holy Work. Thou hast passed the threshold of our order, through scenes of darkness and trial. Thou hast taken the Oath, which makes thy heart grow cold to remember.

“Now kneeling at my feet, thou seekest to know the nature of this Holy Work, which thou hast sworn to fulfil.

“Listen !

“It is to fight the Anti-Christ of Rome, with his own weapons. To oppose false swearing to false swearing, blasphemy to blasphemy, murder to murder. It is to hate his followers ; to crush the Catholic ; to scatter his church to the winds of heaven in smoke and flame. Be it thy solemn care, faithfully and with thy whole soul, to perform this holy work. Whenever thou dost meet a Catholic look upon him as an enemy of God and man ; a wild beast whom it is religion to destroy. Crush him by soft words, by kind means if thou canst ; but if it must be, crush him by the dagger, the pistol and the torch ; crush him in the name of the Bible, in the name of God.

“Behold this Cross, which I now raise to the light. Look up Brother, and look upon it well. Be it thy work to drag that cross from the altar, to trample it under foot, for it is the Cross of Rome !”—

Malachi looked up in wonder. There, tall and imposing in his dark robes stood the Grand Master, lifting on high with both hands a massive cross, which contrasted with his attire looked like a holy thing in the hands of Satan.

He stood there, that Pontiff of Darkness, lifting the white cross on high, while his muffled face turned from side to side, as though he surveyed each member of the brotherhood.

“Look upon it, brother. It is there in light and glory. But let us join in the watch-word of the L. P. O. ; let us shout with one voice—

“DOWN WITH THE ANTI-CHRIST OF ROME—DOWN WITH THE CATHOLIC—DOWN WITH THE CROSS !”

He raised that white cross high above his head, and then with all the force of his vigorous arms, hurled it on the floor.

At that moment each brother rose and dashed his torch upon the floor and joined in the chorus :

"DOWN WITH THE CROSS!" rose in a volume of thunder, from an hundred throats.

All was darkness. Yet that watch-word in one long, terrific howl filled the place.

All was darkness, yet ere the last torch smoking on the floor went out in night, by the last gleam of light, there in the centre of the platform towered the tall form of the Grand Master, one foot placed upon the white fragments of the broken cross, while his clenched right hand was raised to heaven.

CHAPTER SECOND.

LEON.

BENDING over the casket, his figure agitated by a slight tremor, his massive brow crimsoned by the glare of the torch, LEON gazed upon the secret of his life.

All at once, from the shadows of the casket, the glitter of jewels, the mild gleam of precious metal, broke on the eyes of the kneeling man. A wild expression of joy, hope, triumph, flashed over his face. For there, in the full glare of the light, a miniature encircled by its massy frame of diamonds and gold, fascinated the gaze of his dark eye.

With an eager grasp Leon seized the picture, and at the same time, drew forth from the darkness of that iron chest, a mass of parchments, tied together by a faded string.

Leon silently inserted the torch in the centre of the cavity, and then grasping the miniature in his hands, gazed upon the face delineated there, with one long fixed glance.

As he gazed his face became deathly pale; his compressed lips assumed the color of ashes, while his eyes, glaring from beneath the knit brows, seemed chained to the portrait by some strange magnetic fascination.

He laid that portrait in his bosom next to his heart, whose beatings might be heard, like the throbbing of the death-watch in some room of a dying man, and then snapping the time-worn string, opened the first parchment.

What words were there, traced in a foreign tongue, what seal was this, stamped on the yellow surface, what Signature was here, traced in decided characters, beneath the seal?

Another parchment, and another; there were three in all. With that same glaring eye, he read each one, while his hard-drawn breath, broke on the surface of the vault like the respirations of a dying man. Then his eye glared more wildly, his face grew paler, his livid lips quivered with a horrible

spasm; he dropped the parchments in the casket, and fell forward like a dead man, with his face to the hard clay, while the torch-light tinted his dark brown hair, and revealed his stiffened hands.

As he fell, a single word, uttered in a voice that seemed torn from his heart, shrieked on the silence of the vault.

"OH—FATHER!" he gasped and fell.

And as this bold and enthusiastic youth lay there, stiff and cold as marble, his strong brain overwhelmed by the revelation of the casket, let us ask what mysteries were these, which alternately fired and chilled his blood, took the color from his face, stamped his red lips with the hue of ashes, and increased the almost savage glare of his dark eyes.

That Portrait, so serene in its calm dignity, with its great forehead projecting over those eyes, which looked into the souls of men, that portrait in the unostentatious uniform, with the star gleaming over the heart—wherefore should it cause such terrible emotions?

Those parchments, with their writing in a foreign tongue, their heavy seals and bold signature—what terrible secret did they reveal?

Poor boy! Nursed in want, steeped to the very lips in the cold baptism of poverty, at last the sufferings of years were repaid, at last *he knew his father's name*.

Poor boy! The time had been, when he could not call the hardest crust of bread his own, and now he was the *lawful possessor of Fifteen million dollars*.

Poor boy! Contemned, even from childhood, for the brand of illegitimacy, which the world stamped upon his brow, he now might walk into the presence of Kings, and tell them, that One mightier than them all, who had made their thrones his playthings and their necks his footstool, *WAS HIS FATHER*.

He lay stiff and motionless, his face pressed against the hard clay, while silence like the grave, reigned in the vaulted cellar.

At last—after a long, dead pause—this silence was broken by a harsh sound, the creaking of a door. This sound, sharp and grating, seemed to call Leon back to life. He slowly raised his head, his eyes glared wildly, as though unable to distinguish objects. It was evident from his pale face, wandering eyes and startled look, that his senses were lost in that wild confusion, which darkens the intellect of a man who awakens suddenly from some hideous dream.

The sound of a footstep, again that harsh creaking of a door!

Leon arose in a sitting posture, and gazed fixedly into the darkness of the vault. The manner in which the light was placed, threw the iron door and the stairway into deep shadow.

Yet there, in front of that iron door, arising in the dim obscurity, Leon—while his senses whirled in mad confusion—beheld the outlines of a tall

figure, enveloped in a cloak, with large deep earnest eyes, lighting a solemn face, and flashing upon him, even through the darkness.

That sight, so dim, so vague, yet so impressive in the gloom of the vault, fired the blood of the half-awakened man.

With an instinctive movement, he closed the casket, gathered it under his left arm, and then sprang to his feet, with the dagger in his right hand.

"Ah—blasphemer of the dead, robber of the orphan, I have met you at last!"

As he spoke these words in a deep sonorous voice, he advanced towards the statue-like figure, who still regarded him with a fixed immovable glance. At that moment a voice thundered through the vault; it was the stern, indignant tone of Calvin Wolfe.

"Brothers, this man has dared to penetrate our Secret! Brothers we are betrayed!"

All at once as he spoke, Leon felt the glare of many torches blinding his eyes, he saw the vault crowded with hideous forms, clubs were lifted to crush him, pistols levelled at his heart.

He knew not whether it was a dream or reality, but his fascinated glance still rested upon that figure, standing calm and collected amid all the confusion, while those earnest eyes returned his gaze, with a look of scorn and wonder.

It was indeed Calvin Wolfe who stood there, his form raised to its full height, while he contemplated the frenzied face of the young man, with a gradual emotion stealing over his commanding features.

"Yes," shrieked Leon, "It was you that robbed the Orphan! You that trampled upon the Will of the dead! You that have condemned me to want and poverty for twenty years!"

"Will you not seize him?" calmly exclaimed Wolfe, turning to the strange and hideous forms, who thronged the vault, their torches flashing over their heads, while clubs arose and pistols glittered in the light.

Leon pressed the hilt of his dagger to his forehead, as if in the effort to restore his wandering reason. Then flinging his noble head aloft, he wound his left arm round the casket, and with a look of scorn confronted the circle of his foes.

"Give way!" he shouted, "Give way, or I will cut you down!"

Those rough men, with faces brutalized by savage passion, shrank back from his path: even Wolfe started aside. There was something magnificent in that erect form, with the head thrown back on the shoulders, while the dark eyes flashed from side to side, as if selecting the first victim for the dagger's point.

Leon took advantage of this momentary sensation. With one bound he reached the stairway; in a moment he stood in the room above. All was dark around him, but still enfolding the precious casket, he crossed that

chamber, and stood in the deserted hall, with the light of the rising moon streaming through the panes above the door, upon his brow.

Leon stood for a moment, with his right hand, which grasped the dagger pressed to his brow. All was confusion again. He could not remember the manner in which he had entered the old mansion. He darted toward the hall door, shook the massy bolts, but it resisted all his efforts.

Then the sounds of pursuit thundered on his ears; shouts, cries, curses awoke the echoes of the next room. It was the work of a moment to spring up that dark stairway, along a gloomy passage, up another stairway. All the while, the senses of the young man were darkened by a strange spell. He heard the sounds of pursuit, he knew that a danger threatened him, he rushed onward without knowing whither.

At last the cool night air fanned his fevered brow. He stood in the dormer window of a deserted garret, gazing upon the midnight sky. The moon—a pale crescent of silver—rose in the eastern horizon, mellowing with its soft light the broad bosom of the Delaware; the wilderness of roofs which formed the distant city.

A dim mass of fields and woods rose up between his vision and the city, but the sky so soft, serene, and beautiful, seemed to fill his soul with a strange peace. His reason began to resume its sway. Yet still his mind was far from its usual vigorous tone, still his memory was confused, bewildered, darkened.

Look at him as he stands there, in the centre of that dormer window, his pale face and manly form revealed in dim moonlight, while the dagger gleams in his uplifted right hand. Tell me, is it not a noble image of youth and enthusiasm, that now stands disclosed in the first beams of the rising moon?

"Ah, it is all dark—dark and hideous! I am bewildered in some hideous dream. Yet still the casket—it is here, it is no dream! My Father! It is thy spirit that fires my veins, it is thy will that steels my soul. I will triumph yet, I will——"

The blaze of torches flashed round the old garret, footsteps were heard on the stairway; those hideous forms filled the place.

Leon turned and beheld the tall form, the sneering face of Wolfe. With one bound he sprang into the recess of the dormer window. The rotten sash fell in a crumbling mass, before his arm. He sprang forth upon the roof, which steep and moss-covered was adorned with heavy mouldings along the edge.

Leon was ascending this roof, with some vague intention of escape when his foot slipped on a piece of moss, he tottered backward, he fell! At this moment while his right arm arose in a gesture of despair, while his rolling eyes glared in the light of the moon, Wolfe tall and erect, appeared without the dormer window, his form relieved the torchlight behind him.

"Ah, my friend," he muttered, "So you have paid the forfeit of your curiosity. That is a steep roof and an ugly place for a backward fall!"

He flung his cloak aside, and cautiously slid along the shingles, until his feet rested against the massive mouldings along the edge of the roof. Was it a fancy, a delusion of his eyesight—No! There, twining around a small wooden urn which arose in the centre of the mansion, on the verge of the roof, he beheld the quivering fingers of a human hand. His victim was not yet gone!

Nearer and nearer to the verge he drew, at last placing his arms around the thickest part of the urn, while his feet rested against a smaller one at the distance of a few paces, he leaned forward and looked over.

The sight which he beheld would have drawn tears of blood from a heart of stone.

For there, clinging to the bottom of the urn with his right hand, while his left gathered the casket to his side hung Leon, the object of his pursuit, his head cast back upon his shoulders, his livid face with the starting eyes distinctly disclosed by the light of the moon.

"Ah, my friend, something strikes me that I have seen your face before. Perchance you have more to do with my fate than I am aware. I will not unwind your hand, I will not push you down, but you must see that I can not save you!"

As in this tone of cool mockery he leaned over the urn, and gazed in the face of the doomed man the moon rising over the trees around the mansion, revealed all the terrible details of this picture.

Above the urn—that face with the high brow, the cold glassy eyes and the sneering lip—below—that young countenance, now horribly transformed in the last struggle for life, the lips pressed between the teeth, the eyes protruding until a circle of white was seen around each pupil.

At this moment, Leon's reason returned to him again. On the brink of a horrible death, his mind shone forth in all its vigor.

"I will not die!" he said, between his clenched teeth, looking up into the mocking face of Calvin Wolfe.

As he spoke, one by one, his fingers began to unclothe their grasp.

These events took place near midnight, on the First of May, 1844.

In order to understand them in all their details, it will now be necessary for us to retrace our steps, and picture certain scenes which occurred between sunset and midnight, on this First of May, 1844.

These scenes will reveal to us much that is beautiful, and much that is terrible; much that elevates the soul with admiration, much that fills the heart with disgust and hatred.

Between sunset and midnight, on the First of May, 1844, we will behold—

A BEAUTIFUL GIRL, arraying herself for her Bridal Night—

A BANK PRESIDENT, using his legal but infamous power, for the attainment of his unholy purposes—

A STATESMAN, charged with stepping onward towards the Presidency of the Union, over Frauds that would consign a poor man to the common goal—

THE SECRET CONCLAVE, of a band of Clergymen, whose object is persecution, veiled under the well-sounding names of Christianity and Protestantism—

THE ORGIES OF UNPRINCIPLED PARTIZANS, who riot on the money bequeathed by a great man to the Orphans of all future time—

A SOLITARY BOAT, tossing upon the moon-lit waves of the Atlantic, bearing shipwrecked and famished men, onward to the fulfilment of their destiny—

THE POPE OF ROME, surveying the future destiny of his Church on the American Continent, when it shall become to the Republic, what the SouFis to the Body; a great vital centre of Life, heat and action—

THE ARMING OF A DESPERATE BAND of men, for scenes of riot and murder—

THE DAUGHTER of the Bank President, and the Child of an immortal lineage—

ONE MAN OF GENIUS, with the blood of a hero coursing through his veins, —while his heart is crushed by an overwhelming wrong,—uttering this solemn vow: *To oppose the might of his intellect, the power of his wealth, the labor of his life, to all the evils of a Corrupt Civilization, whether they appear in the form of Fanaticism, or the tyranny of Banking Institutions, or the Robbery of Orphans, or the Plunder of the Indian Race—*

When we have looked upon these scenes, together with others, with which they are by the natural course of events, connected, we will have attained the hour of midnight on the First of May, 1844, in one word, we will stand upon the threshold of this revelation, prepared to understand its mysteries, analyze its truths, and follow its windings to their end

CHAPTER THIRD.

A BEAUTIFUL GIRL.

—A BEAUTIFUL girl fresh from the hands of God, her cheek rounded with youth, warming with health and blushing with the glow of sweet seventeen. In stature is neither tall to awkwardness, nor diminutive to a fault, she stands there, an image of sweet and confiding woman, who would cling to the man she loved, through life, look up to him in difficulty, and repose on

his arm in the hour of death. Her face is marked by an alabaster clearness of hue, without speck or blemish, varied by the rose-buds that seem just breaking into view from each swelling cheek; her small mouth with ripe and pouting lips, is now wreathed in the most winning smile, or again compressed by the prettiest scorn; her brow is fair, clear and thoughtful in its expression, while the rich luxuriance of her brown hair, parted in the centre of the head, and gathered behind in clustering tresses, gives a beautiful relief to the touching innocence of her countenance, where her eyes dark, without being black, full, wild and dreamy in their expression, shine forth like twin stars, marking the pathway to the heaven of her inmost heart. The dimple of her cheeks when she smiles, the soft reduplication of her rounded chin, the unspotted whiteness of the neck, with the faint glimpse of the bosom, whose heavings are marked by the cross of gold, depending from its golden chain, now rising in the light, now sinking from the view—may not be pictured in words, may not be pictured by the pencil, nor shadowed in the burning words of the Poet.

Tell me, as she stands there, how would you name her character from her face? Gazing upon that young countenance, would not words like these rise to your lips—She is beautiful; she's more, she is lovely; she is even more, she is innocent without inexperience, well-informed without pretension, deeply, purely religious, without one taint of fanaticism.—

Do you see that Picture, breaking upon you from the luxurious gloom of this chamber?

Do you see that young girl standing there, an image of virgin loveliness, her arms and feet bared to the light, as she hastily gathers that dark mantle around her form, while her white shoulders seem more beautiful by contrast?

Confess with me, that this chamber is a holy temple, where beauty so tender, so pure, so virginal may shroud itself from the eyes of the impious, and yet unclothe its glories to the light.

Circular in form, the wall concealed by silken curtains of light azure, the ceiling rising in a dome, on which the faint blue sky, the soft fleecy clouds of a summer morning are delineated, the floor one white mass of purest marble, with a dark carpet of the finest texture, laid in the centre, this chamber is pervaded by a soft light, a delicious fragrance.

The young girl stands in the centre of the carpet, her white feet resting on its soft dark wool. The light of a silver lamp, suspended from the dome above, falls gently on her head.

On her left, you behold the uniformity of the hangings broken by two pillars of white marble, slender in form, sculptured into leaves and flowers near the ceiling, while the curtains thrown aside between them, reveal a glimpse of another chamber, crowded with flowers, whose fragrance imbues the air.

Beautiful flowers of every shape and hue, from the rose just breaking into bloom, or the Ethiopian lily, whose alabaster whiteness is relieved by large

green leaves, to the deep scarlet flower of Mexico, or the gentle violet of Siberian wastes, burst on your eye, from the shadows of that chamber.

On the right of the maiden, a massive mirror rising from the floor to the ceiling, and framed in a golden vine with golden leaves, grapes and blossoms, reflects her young form, relieved by the white pillars and the mass of flowers between them.

Yonder, behind this girl, at the distance of some few paces, a white altar is seen, thrown into bold relief by the blue curtaining of the room. Above that altar smiles the Virgin Mary, sculptured in alabaster, while an opened Bible is laid upon its snowy surface, between two candles of wax, whose pure flame at once illuminate the sad, tender, loving face of the Blessed Mother, the cross of her Son which she presses to her heart, the sacred pages of the book, enclosed in gorgeous binding with clasps of gold.

From the carpet on which the young girl stands, the floor sinks down in a bath of perfumed water, enclosed in a colossal shell of dark marble, which is environed on its four sides by steps ascending in easy gradations, to the level of the chamber. No words can depict the elegance of taste, the beauty of design which mark the structure of this bath. Four nymphs of alabaster surround it, extending their snowy arms towards its waters, as they sparkle in the air in slender columns, like scattered diamonds, and trickle slowly down again over the steps of white marble.

Down these snowy steps with all her pure beauty disclosed by the soft radiance, her senses cheered by the fragrance of flowers, her soul elevated by the offerings of prayer this sinless girl is wont to descend, casting her young limbs to the perfumed waters, while her dark brown hair streams wildly over her shoulders, and her bosom swells with life and innocence and love.

Can a picture more beautiful be imagined?

She has just risen from the bath.

Startled by some distant sound, like the echo of approaching footsteps she has sprung from the waves, whose soft warmth infused new life into her veins, she has ascended the steps of marble and gathering the dark mantle around her form, stood there in the centre of the room, her white arms pressing its folds to her bosom, while with her face turned to, her right shoulder, her lips parted and her dark eye gleaming, she gazed into the shadows of the next chamber.

And all the while the water gleamed in pearl-drops from her flowing hair, as it lay in glossy masses over the white shoulder, which rose into view above the midnight darkness of her mantle.

Why should she thus start up from the voluptuous warmth of the bath, frightened at the sound of a footstep? Where was the hand that would lay the finger of harm upon a creature so pure, so innocent, so beautiful? What footstep might bring sorrow to that young heart, whose warm pulsations now swelled the bosom beneath the clasped arms?

Ah, there was none to harm, none to make her afraid. The darling of wealth reared in luxurious chambers, whose thick carpets returned no echo to the footstep, reposing on soft couches whose delicious warmth gave a golden glow to her maiden dreams, the food which nourished her served on plates of gold, the garments which enclosed her young limbs glittering with diamonds, the carriage which whirled her from her home, cushioned with velvet, which yielded in easy folds to the pressure of her form, she had never known the shadow of a peril, never felt the pulsation of a sorrow.

The very temple in which she stood, adorned with all that taste or genius might create or wealth procure, was a visible proof of that love—almost adoration—which watched over her life.

She started up, not with fear of harm, but with that instinctive modesty which thrills the breast of a pure and beautiful woman, as she fears that some profane eye might gaze upon her, while in her most secret chamber she unveils her beauties to the light.

She stood thus for a moment, in that attitude of trembling suspense, and then advanced toward the altar, her uncovered feet appearing beneath the folds of the dark mantle, which her bared arms gathered to her bosom.

She knelt beside the altar. Yes, while her dark brown hair flowed over her shoulders, while the folds of the mantle adapted themselves to the graceful yet blooming outlines of her shape, revealing the whiteness of her neck, the delicate proportions of her waist, the voluptuous fulness of her virgin form, she knelt there beside the altar, and fixed her upturned eyes upon the Blessed Mother.

O, there was a speechless love and eloquence and prayer, gleaming from her dark eyes as she knelt in silence there.

The bloom of her cheeks, the alabaster of her brow, the darkness of her hair, the ripeness of her lips, the roundness of those white arms, the delicate shape of the hands were all disclosed in dim and softened light.

You might as well attempt to paint the evening star, as to picture the light of those large full eyes. From beneath long lashes gleamed a trembling ray, which enchained the gazer's eye to that young face, with a fascination beyond the power of analysis or description. You could not tell the color of those eyes; they were not black, they were not azure; they were not hazel. They were large, dark, intensely brilliant. These poor words were all that you could say, as you gazed upon the eyes gleaming from the young bloom of the maiden's face. They were lifted now in prayer.

That prayer was not given to the air in words, nor in the formal ritual of a sectarian creed. No! It was but the warm breathing of that sinless heart, as it ascended in silent love to its God; the love of the child thanking with deep earnest eyes the care of the FATHER.

And in that maiden prayer two faces were seen, hovering above her head, in clouds of golden softness; a noble face with the flowing hair whose hues mingled the purple of twilight with the darkness of midnight, a noble face

with all that is pure in manhood, all that is majestic in Divinity, stamped upon its radiant brow ; while by its side there gleamed another countenance, soft and sad and serene, its large full eyes dilating with the silent intensity of a Mother's love.

It was the face of Jesus, the countenance of Mary, the Virgin Mother which linked in one holy picture, shone as if from heaven, over the still deep waters of that Maiden Soul.

Presently she arose. Her eye was fixed upon the Bible, as her soul drank in all the beauty of that passage where the Three Marias beautiful and blessed, came sadly to their Saviour's tomb, looking down into its shadows with swelling hearts and dilating eyes. These were her thoughts ; not syllabled in words, but rising silently from the depths of her soul.

" O, it is beautiful ! All the world—all save beloved John had forsaken him—and here on that calm morn came three weeping women, advancing as their tears fall, toward the tomb of their dead Lord. They look into its shadows—he is gone ! Not even the body remains, as a memorial of Him who was crucified on the steep of Calvary, amid the scorn of priest and people, under the awful pall of a darkened universe. Jesus is gone—yet still these woman-hearts cling fondly to his memory. One of the three—I see her now with large blue eyes and golden hair—she whom HE had raised from sin into virtue, from degradation into purity, approaches a Form which in the dimness of that serens dawn she mistakes for the gardener. ' If ye have taken away my Lord,' bursts in trembling accents from her lips, ' tell me where ye have laid him ! ' Then the Form before her changes—expands—glows all at once into Divinity. A voice speaks from those lips, oh, how soft and deep and musical ! It says but one word, but that word is spoken in a tone that thrills the woman's heart, for it is her own name, spoken in the dear voice that bade her live—MARY ! Ah—that scene is before me now—here the new-risen Jesus so beautiful and Divine—there Mary lifting her wondering eyes to his face, while her lips utter one low-whispered word—' MASTER ! ' "

Resting one white hand on the sacred page, the young girl stood in an attitude of serene thought, her eyes uplifted, in mute love and awe, as in a whisper, she gave utterance to the musings of her virgin heart.

That heart was BEAUTIFUL.

For it looked into the book of God, not for themes of controversy, or the text-words of church and creed, but for those scenes, which at once strike the heart with a sense of the BEAUTIFUL.

Gentle Ruth clasping her hands upon the breast of Naomi, as she whispers, Thy people shall be my people, thy God my God ; the dark-haired daughter of Jephthah, springing forward from the threshold of home, her arms extended to greet the father and chief ; Isaiah rising above all the Prophets, as with glowing words and radiant eyes, he saw the approach of that time, when Beauty should descend from God and dwell on earth forever ;

Mary bending over the Immortal Child, her calm face kindling into rapture, as her lips were pressed to the lips of the future Christ; that Christ himself, cheered on his wandering way by the hands of the poor, while beautiful women grouped around his feet, looked up to him with speaking eyes, their hearts swelling at the sound of his voice—such were the themes, which, glowing from the pages of the Bible, awakened into life all that was pure and beautiful in the maiden's soul.

She stood for a moment absorbed in thoughts like these, and then lifting the lid of the book, she drew forth from the blank leaves that precede the title page, a letter, which she pressed rapturously to her lips and bosom.

"PAUL!" she murmured in a whisper, deep and impassioned, and again the letter was pressed to her lips and buried in her bosom.

Her face glowed with a soft yet burning flush; her eyes were bathed in moisture, that mellowed while it deepened their rapturous glance.

"O, Father!" she cried, raising that letter heaven-ward, between her clasped hands: "I am too happy."

A shade came over her face, and a shudder pervaded her young frame. An instant and the shade was gone, the tremor had passed away, but was that thought of a moment forgotten?

That terrible Thought, which gloomed over her heart for an instant only, whispering its dread message to her soul, *'Maiden, you are happy now, but sorrow will come! Now your eyes are bathed in tears of rapture—soon your heart will shed tears of woe. It is dawn with you now, but the Night draws near.'*

Yet her cheek was flushed again, her eye bright with living light. She passed from the chamber, gathering the dark mantle about her form, with the same hands that pressed the letter to her bosom.

She passed among the flowers in the next chamber. Through the curtains of a lofty window, she looked forth upon evening sky. The light of the May moon bathed her young face and gleamed on her uplifted eyes.

That sky that extended there, so pure, so clear, so like the sky of some fairer clime, which we behold in our dreams, that serene evening sky arching above the lofty mansions of Arch Street, their dull red brick, mellowed by the same beams that silvered the foliage of the trees, broke on the vision of the young girl like an omen of good.

"To-night will be a happy night, for God smiles upon me, from yonder sky!"

With that thought warming her heart, she passed from the dim place of flowers, and entered a luxuriously furnished chamber, illumined by a soft, voluptuous light. Her eye was fixed upon two objects here, while all other sights passed unheeded by her glance. Not the gorgeous furniture of that spacious chamber, the massive mirrors, the carpet, which had been purchased with a king's ransom, nor other appointments of the room, chained her glance for a moment.

A dress of white satin, slung over a chair, its surface lighted by the warm

gleam of pearls, the dazzling lustre of diamonds. The maiden gazed upon this robe with an expression as rapturous as it was indefinable.

Then turning she beheld the white counterpane of yonder couch, gleaming from the interval of the silken canopy above, like a bed of snow from a curtain of clouds. Her head sunk upon her bosom. Face and neck and arms were flushed with burning red.

That dress, adorned with diamonds and gold, was her—Bridal Robe; that curtained couch her—Bridal Bed.

Therefore, trembling in every nerve, her heart swelling with a deep joy, while a warm blush ripened over her face and bosom, did she stand, with downcast head and folded arms, half hidden in her flowing hair.

Was it the consciousness of evil, was it the knowledge of one earthly thought, that crimsoned her face and neck in burning blushes? Ah, no! She stood upon the threshold of a heaven on earth, where all that was pure in her dreams, beautiful in her thoughts, would become the Realities of her life. That blush was but the young heart rushing to the face; the last drop of the full cup of joy, bubbling over the brim.

An hour passed.

She stood there again, in the mild voluptuous light of the Bridal chamber, but the dark mantle no longer was gathered by white arms to her maiden form.

Those limbs were robed in a dress of white satin, under whose skirt the small feet, enclosed in delicate slippers were visible, while the bosom heaved beneath its burden of diamonds, so vivid and flashing, pearls so mild and tremulous in their light. A veil of white lace floated down from her forehead, and mingled with the tresses of her dark brown hair. A single gem of dazzling lustre, gleamed from the centre of that alabaster brow. Her arms half bared, exposed their rounded outlines from the thick folds of the sleeves, which fell by her side.

That dress would not have shamed a queen, but it was not the veil of lace, the robe of silk, the pearl rising with each pulsation of the bosom, or the jewel flashing from the brow, that fixed your eye.

The young face warming in each cheek with a gentle flush, the red lips parting with expectation, the dark eyes gleaming with passion, the brow radiant with the purity of a virgin heart—this burst in all its innocence and bloom upon your soul.

She advanced towards the door, but at that moment it was flung open, and her father stood before her.

He was a man of some forty-five years, with a round good-humored face, bald forehead and portly form. His brown hair gathering in short curls around the crown of his head, was already silvered with streaks of grey. Clad in deep black varied by a white satin vest and ruffled bosom, he stood on the threshold gazing upon his child, with silent admiration, while his extended arms were opened to clasp her to his heart.

"Marie!" he said, and in a moment her clasped hands were locked in his own, while she looked tenderly into his smiling face.

He took her by the hand, and led her forth into the hall, which was lighted by a large chandelier suspended from the ceiling.

"My daughter," he said, waving his left hand, "behold your husband!"

As he spoke he pointed to the Bridegroom.

He was indeed a man worthy of the praise of millions, or what is worth all the fame and power of earth multiplied by thousands, the pure treasure of a sinless woman's love.

He stood there six feet high, with a broad chest and manly form, whose muscular outlines were softened by all the grace and ease of young manhood.

Clad with plain dignity in a simple suit of black, his white vest revealing the breadth of his chest, the graceful outlines of his waist, his finely-chiselled throat laid bare by the falling collar encircled by a dark cravat, he reached forth his arms to welcome his Bride.

His face was flushed with a rapture too deep for words.

Picture that magnificent countenance, whose clear skin is already bronzed by toil and travel, with the large white forehead relieved by careless locks of chestnut hair, the blue eyes deepening into black with intense light, the aquiline nose stamped with the contour of a noble race, the mouth wearing an expression of calm dignity, the chin rounded and full stamped with the resolution of a great soul—in one word—picture the face of GEORGE WASHINGTON, flushed by the life and vigor of young manhood, and you will have the Bridegroom's face before you.

Yes, by a strange coincidence this face marked by striking outlines, displayed all the chivalry, enthusiasm and genius which stamped the countenance of George Washington, as it gleamed from among the battle-mists of Braddock's field.

The coincidence did not end here. For this form so muscular yet graceful, expanding with the outlines of manly vigor yet tempered by all that may be called beautiful, in the prime of young manhood, was in one word the form of Washington, as it appeared on the dark day of the Indian Massacre.

The Bridegroom advanced to receive his Bride, but the uplifted hand of the Father held him back.

"Paul!" he said, as his good-humored voice grew tremulous with emotion—"Ere I surrender this my only child to your arms, let me tell you that since the hour when her dying mother held her to my embrace, now seventeen years ago, she has been the hope and the joy of my life. Two months ago, you appeared in my house, a stranger. My daughter saw and loved you. I knew that you were not rich, nay, you confessed that you were poor. I knew that my child with all her father's wealth for a dowry, might choose her husband among the proudest in the land. But because she loved you, because her happiness was wound up in her love, I gave her

to you. Need I say more? Need I ask you to treat her kindly? Need I tell you that this the darling of my heart, has never known a want, or a care? Take her, Paul—God bless you my boy—take her and love her till you die!”

Had you known the selfish character of this Merchant Prince, who counted his wealth by hundreds of thousands, you would have wondered at these words of deep emotion, these tears rolling down his ruddy cheeks.

At first an indignant flush passed over the face of the Bridegroom; it was when the father spoke of his wealth. But as he went on, as his tone deepened and his tears began to flow, while he gathered his beloved child hurriedly to his bosom, Paul felt his own eyes grow dim, his nether lip quiver.

Trembling in every inch of his proud frame, he silently extended his arms. Not a word was said; her face gleaming with the light of her eyes and glowing with blushes was lifted to his countenance; his heart was too full for speech.

She came to him and laid her hands upon his breast, and looked up into his face.

Was it not a beautiful picture?

The Father stood apart, his round face at other times calm and worldly, now convulsed with emotion, as he fixed his eyes upon his child.

They stood beneath the glare of the chandelier, the Bridegroom and the Bride.

He tall and magnificent in his manly beauty; she tender and loving and bewitching in her maiden blushes.

He gathered his right arm about her waist, and while her head fell gently backward, as the full beauty of her face rested beneath his long and ardent gaze, he bent slowly down and pressed upon those red lips now ripening with life and love, one long and clinging kiss.

Then gathering her clasped hands gently to his heart, with his left hand, while his right enclosed her waist, he suffered her head to fall against his breast, while their eyes met in the same warm glance, and each in a whisper, murmured the other's name:

“Paul!”

“Marie!”

CHAPTER FOURTH.

THE WEDDING.

THE spacious saloon of the Merchant Prince blazed with light and life and loveliness.

Considered as a mere picture, the scene was at once animated, brilliant and effective.

The lofty walls warmed into life with paintings copied from the works of old masters, the light of the massive chandelier, suspended from the stuccoed ceiling, revealed the rich appointments of the saloon, the carpet glowing with the labor of a foreign loom, chairs cushioned with purple velvet and framed with vines and flowers of gold, the centre table, with its surface one mass of beautiful Mosaic, reflecting every tint of the rainbow, the ottomans glowing with embroidered flowers, and the crimson curtains which hung in heavy folds, from the summit of each window to the floor.

In fine, that spacious saloon was adorned with all that art could elaborate, or money procure. All was dazzle, glitter and show, after the manner of your Philadelphia aristocrats, who mistake the glare of wealth for glory, grandeur and religion; the lustre of a silver dollar for the light of God Almighty's stars.

From a niche sunken in each corner of the room, a statue of snow-white marble gleamed in the light, revealing by its pale beauty, the glitter of the costly furniture around.

An Eve kneeling in solitary loveliness, her hands gently clasped over her pure bosom, as with her eyes downcast, she seems gazing in the fountain, where smiles another Eve, radiant as herself—

An Apollo,—image of manly strength and beauty, with one foot advanced, one hand uplifted, while his lip curls and his eye dilates, as his glance follows the flight of the distant arrow—

A Napoleon, solemn and sad and god-like, standing with folded arms and fixed eyeballs, as though looking from the cliff of St. Helena—

A Washington, young and radiant, his cheek rounded with the outlines of young manhood; his form clad in a huntsman's tunic and moccasins, as with extended arms and head thrown proudly backward on his shoulders, he seems gazing on the Allegheny river, from the summit of some wooded steep—

Such were the statues, white, serene and beautiful, sculptured in purest marble, by the hand of a master of his art.

Here in this spacious saloon, a strangely contrasted crowd were assembled, to grace the wedding of the Merchant's child.

At first glance you beheld nothing but the gleam of pearls, the blaze of dia-

monds, white laces waving in the breeze, which ever and again came through the curtained windows, or silks and satins glowing in the light, or broadcloth of every hue, contrasted with snowy Marseilles vests and faultless shirt bosoms.

But the second glance informed you, that these pearls encircled necks like alabaster, these diamonds were pillowed on fair bosoms, these laces waved aside from faultless arms, or mingled with the tresses of raven-black hair, while the silks and satins various in hue, enveloped forms, that uncovered would have shamed the kneeling Eve with their peerless loveliness. As for the broadcloth and vests and shirt bosoms, they belonged to men of every class of appearance and demeanour, from the mild-faced dandy with his melancholy moustache and patent boots, to the grave lawyer, with his portly frame and sedate smile.

Here a Russian Count, displaying a little spot of face in a wilderness of hair, while his muscular form glistened with stars and orders and jewelry of every shape and pattern, sat as silent as one of his own serfs before their Lord; there a Mexican Ambassador, with his circle of ladies, some fair and beautiful, some venerable with powder and rouge, discoursed in most villainous English, and smiled fearfully with his white teeth, relieved by his sun-burnt and wrinkled visage.

In the centre of the room, however, was the grand attraction.

Surrounded by his circle of beautiful women, sate a man of some fifty-eight years, his portly form, imposing in its stature, clad in deep black, varied only by the shirt bosom and the faultless white cravat. He sate with his hands gently clasped over his chest, his head inclined to the left shoulder, while his lips wore a calm and patronizing smile.

His face was peculiar.

Regular in features, bold in its forehead, relieved by masses of brown hair, slightly silvered with age, it struck you at first with an impression of extreme sanctity. Yet when you gazed upon those blue eyes, encircled by a dead white enamel, or marked the hue of that skin, unpleasant in its extreme fairness, or caught the patronage of that perpetual smile, or beheld the head inclined to one side, as if in the act of intently listening, an impression stole over you, strange and mingled in its character.

You could not divest yourself of the idea, that this face, was but the outer mask of that kind of heart, which but one compound word in our language expresses; COLD-BLOODED. A face, in fact, such as the surgeon wore, who paused in his work of dissecting a *living* subject, to ask with a soft accent and bland smile, My dear fellow, where does it hurt you now?

Yet this was a GREAT MAN!

O, humblest Hindoo Idol, made by filthy priests with mud from the ditch, and rotten sticks from the marsh, and then held up to the eyes of millions as a God, tell us, in what do you differ from this thing which we grow on American soil, this thing which crawls into light through the various grada-

tions of caucus and convention, and at last puffed up with the arrogance of imbecility, swelled with a knowledge of the tricks of party, bursting with a few well-sounding phrases on law and politics and morals, stands forth on its eminence of humbug, an object for the gaze of a nation—in one word—
A GREAT MAN!

Yes this was the GREAT MR. MILLSTONE OF MILASTOGA, in the state of Blank.

"Ah—dear Mr. Millstone," said a fair-haired girl, bending with bewitching grace before the great man, "Do you not find the duties of your station very arduous?"

"Miss Julia," answered the Statesman, with a melancholy smile, "The world I fear, does not appreciate the toil of those who rule it. 'To be high in position, devoting all the energies of life and soul to the great national welfare, is to stand alone, like the lion on his solitary rock, or the eagle on his dizzy perch.' Such was the remark of an ancient author, and alas (*with a slight inclination of the head, and a deep sigh,*) alas! it is too true!"

"Ah, you great men clothe every thought in the solemn drapery of an apothegm!" lisped Miss Julia, while an ecstasy of delight pervaded the circle.

"What philosophy!" simpered an ancient virgin, whose withered cheeks were marked by the glare of rouge.

"So profound, too!" chimed in a moustachioed dandy, leaning over her shoulder.

"He is a dear good man!" was the enthusiastic remark of a very pretty girl, blonde in complexion, with laughing eyes. "How well he looks in that white cravat!"

"Indeed," whispered a tall woman, with Roman features, as she gathered her scarf more closely over her white shoulders, "it is easy to perceive that Mr. Millstone of Milastoga, will soon be elevated to the highest office in the people's gift!"

"And such a white cravat!" chimed in the lovely Blonde.

There was the secret after all. The white cravat, the gentle smile, the bland soft whisper of the voice, purring so mildly from the smiling lips, these together made the charm, clothing every thought in the solemn drapery of an apothegm.

"Mr. Millstone of Milastoga! Charming alliteration—poetical. Quite so!" murmured a man in a dark dress, with a sickly visage, much broken out around the lips and chin, with scattered bits of beard—"I hope it will not be considered indelicate, if I recite my last poem to our *distinguished* friend, published in our *leading* magazine?"

Laying a strong emphasis on the italicized words, this person who it was understood compiled books, and read sermons from distinguished clergymen, as his own, commenced the recitation of this wonderful poem:

"Like a Senator of old wrapped in his toga,
Stood the great Millstone of Milastoga——"

Here his recitation stopped short, for every eye was turned toward the opened door, in which a new-comer appeared, announced by the servant in livery.

One murmur of surprise and admiration pervaded the room. The servant in livery mumbled a name which nobody heard, and the stranger strode silently to a seat.

As he advanced every eye beheld that sinewy yet agile form, enveloped in a plain blue frock-coat, with a single row of gold buttons in front, while a rich shawl wound over the right shoulder, fell in graceful folds by his side. His step was princely, his form straight as a wild poplar, his face stamped with the traces of a commanding intellect, was marked by a dark bronze hue, high cheek bones, aquiline nose, firm lips and jet black eyes. His brow broad massive and well developed was shaded by masses of dark hair, which in coarseness of texture resembled the mane of a war-horse. In a word he was an Indian; and a nobler specimen of the Forest Prince, never looked defiance into the face of the white man.

Striding through the wondering spectators, without casting a look on either side, he took his seat near the Statue of Washington, and folding his arms surveyed the company with a look of calm derision.

The murmur of surprise and wonder, deepened into indignation.

"A very singular person indeed, for Mr. Markham to invite to his daughter's wedding!" said Miss Rouge the ancient maiden, with much bitterness of tone.

The milk-faced dandy raised his eye-glass:

"A coverlid wound over his shoulder!"

The Russian Count uttered a growl, strongly spiced with consonants, while the Mexican Ambassador exclaimed in very lame English: "Dat fellow is a queer. He is a very queer—a very queer."

"Do you think him handsome, Mr. Millstone?" whispered the beautiful Miss Julia.

"Rather singular, Miss Julia, I should say, quite singular!" exclaimed the Statesman with some slight signs of uneasiness. The steady gaze of that strange Indian somewhat unsettled his nerves. "Where——" he muttered—"where have I seen that man? Somewhere I am sure—somewhere—but where?"

Meanwhile every eye was fixed upon the Indian, who sat with folded arms gazing intently in the face of the Great Man.

The murmur deepened. Heads were laid together, sidelong glances cast over the shoulder, glasses raised to the eyes of elegantly dressed creatures, whom it were a strong poetical license to call *men*; and broken exclamations uttered in whispering tones, pervaded the air.

Yet still that calm young Indian stood it all. His dark eyes emitted a wild deep light however, as their steady gaze rested upon the Statesman's face.

The conversation in the saloon suddenly assumed a new and most interesting tone.

"Do you know this Mount-Laurel, Miss Adeline?" asked a creature whose stunted person was carefully elaborated in corsets and tight boots.

"Why, Francis," replied Miss Adeline, a lovely girl of five and thirty, very prominent in the nose; "I cannot say that I do know him. Singular in his manners, I believe—"

Here a portly gentleman, in a double-breasted vest, splashed with all the colors of Joseph's coat, took up the conversation with a single monosyllable, uttered with a wringing bitterness of enunciation:

"Poor!" said he, wriggling his short nose, until it almost melted away in his white eyebrows. "Poor!"

This was a Third street Broker, who never has money, but always knows a friend who may have some.

"He is rather handsome," lisped Miss Julia, "But what an odd name—Mount-Laurel!"

At this crisis, the Statesman condescended to gossip a little; bending his head slightly downward, he exclaimed in a bland whisper:

"Mount-Laurel, I am told, is but a translation of an unpronounceable Indian name. It appears the gentleman, who is to be united to night, to the charming Miss Markham, is from the far west. He is said to be moderately rich—

"Poor!" interrupted the Broker; "For not more than two months ago, I was talking with Mr. Markman, in his library, on the great flour speculation, when this Don appeared with a Letter of Credit from a western house, for—two hundred dollars! Some small trader out west; perhaps a clerk in some country store. Very poor!"

"He not own one gold mine, perhaps!" exclaimed the Mexican Ambassador, showing his white teeth.

"At all events, ladies and gentlemen," exclaimed a small man, whose hands were secluded from the world, in the depths of his pockets, "It must be seen at a glance, that the wealth which Mr. Mount-Laurel acquires by this marriage, will lift him into consequence on 'Change!"

This was a Market street merchant, who never went to church except to pray for a good speculation in dry-goods, or a rise in the price of ribbons.

"I am informed that this is to be a singular wedding," simpered the Blonde with light blue eyes; "There are to be neither bridesmaids or groomsmen. A whim of the Bridegroom, I suppose!"

Shut off, as he was from the world, by his beard, the Russian Count said something to a young lady by his side, in an unknown tongue, which sounded like a cat in walnut shells, trampling over a basket of eggs.

"At all events, Mr. Mount-Laurel is a handsome fellow," said the tall lady, with the Roman features, whose white shoulders were half-disclosed by the loosened scarf; "And his bearing denotes the gentleman!"

The company were suddenly electrified by a new surprise.

The Indian, who had been silently watching their faces, now arose, and exclaimed in a deep, guttural, yet not unmusical voice :

"Madam, for these kind words I thank you. I am glad to find that Mount-Laurel has another friend in this place, beside myself."

With a sweeping glance that surveyed every face of the company, he resumed his seat, while a dead pause succeeded the late brisk fire of small gossip and polished innuendo.

The Indian sate with his arms folded proudly on his breast, while his dark eyes were again fixed on the Statesman's face.

"Where *have* I seen that man's face?" muttered the Great Man.

At this moment, a servant in scarlet livery turned up with blue, entered and softened the glare of the massive chandelier. At the same time, the folding doors of dark mahogany, which separated this saloon from the next apartment, were rolled slowly back, and a scene of deep interest lay before the wedding guests.

In the dim light which invested the room with an air of religious solemnity, a Priest of the Catholic Church, attired in the imposing robes of his office, was seen standing before a white altar, on which a Bible and Cross were laid. The face of the Priest was turned from the company; his white hairs fell in snowy flashes over the collar of his robe, while the Cross was seen emblazoned across its back.

Beyond the altar, stood the Bridegroom and his Bride, his tall form presenting an effective contrast to her maidenly figure. Paul gazed upon her with a look of mingled pride and love; she returned his gaze, while her face was radiant with blushes. As she lifted her eyes to his face, so proud in its chivalric manhood, you could see her bosom heave beneath the jewelled vest, her lip quiver with inexpressible emotion.

On one side stood Markham, whose wealth won for him the title of the Merchant Prince. His arms were folded across his breast; his eyes were fixed upon his *children*. His round, good-humored face glowed with delight. In a few moments he would bless his wedded child, he would call Paul Mount-Laurel his son.

This picture, revealed by the opening of the folding doors, started the wedding guests from their seats. With one impulse they rose, and silently awaited the commencement of the ceremony. The Indian, too, folding his arms, gazed with a long and eager look upon the face of the Bridegroom, while the Statesman drew imperceptibly nearer to his side.

All was still as death.

The Priest with missal in hand, was ready to commence, nay, the first word was on his lips, when a servant in livery, silently glided up to Mr. Markham's side and whispered a word in his ear.

"I will be with you in a moment," whispered Mr. Markham to the Priest, and then without another word, retired from the room.

A murmur of surprise arose from the company.

"It must be urgent business that calls Mr. Markman away at a moment like *this*—" whispered Miss Rouge.

"Perhaps the details of the Wedding Banquet," replied the great Statesman, with his meaning smile.

Silence prevailed again—moment succeeded moment—and yet the Father did not return. Paul gazed anxiously in the face of his Bride, who began to tremble with embarrassment.

Fifteen minutes had passed, and Mr. Markman did not appear.

One involuntary whisper of astonishment pervaded the saloon. The aged Priest began to grow uneasy; his venerable face was often turned toward the door, or to the face of the Bridegroom. The beautiful women who had gazed upon the bride with a feeling of envy, now began to regard her with looks of compassion. She was evidently suffering from the conflict of emotions; her eyes were downcast, while the young bloom of her cheeks was succeeded by a deathly paleness. Paul wound his arm around her waist to prevent her from sinking to the floor.

"This delay is very singular," said the Priest, breaking the silence which had succeeded the murmur of surprise.

No one answered him. Paul stood there, the object of an hundred eyes, his arm encircling the waist of the fair girl, while his lips were compressed, his cheeks flushed with impatience and suspense.

Half an hour had now passed—half an hour, lengthened into an age.

All was silent as a funeral, just before the sound of the falling clod resounds above the grave.

A hurried footstep was heard; the door was flung rudely open, and Mr. Markham tottered into the room. A change as sudden as it was unexpected and ghastly, had passed over his visage. All color of life or cheerfulness was gone. His face was white as the altar-cloth, his lips livid, his eyes wild and glassy.

With trembling footsteps he advanced toward the Priest. "Father," he said in a husky whisper, which thrilled through every heart, "This marriage cannot proceed."

He turned to his daughter, and gazed in her pale face with a look that chilled her blood, a look of utter misery and despair.

All was silent still. The wedding guests gazed in one another's wondering faces as if to gather each other's opinions from their looks.

Paul Mount-Laurel was now almost as pale and livid as the Merchant Prince. You could see his chest heave beneath his white vest, while a tremor shook his manly frame.

"What mean you, Sir?" he said in a deep stern voice, with a gathering brow.

"Paul, Paul, I will explain all after a while," faltered the Merchant, as trembling in every nerve, he leaned against the altar for support. "Pardon

me now, Paul—pardon me now—a sudden calamity—you understand—you—Marie! Marie!”

He spread forth his arms towards his daughter, tottered forward and fell senseless on the floor.

At this moment a voice hissed these words in the ears of Millstone of Milastoga:

“*We will meet again to-night, my friend!*”

The Statesman looked around in surprise and fear for these words, uttered in deep guttural tones, thrilled him to the heart.

He stood alone in the centre of that wondering throng; no one was near his side, but the *Indian had disappeared*.

“Ah—I remember that voice—that face—it is *he!* It is ——”

A faintly uttered cry quivered through the apartments. Marie awestricken by the spectacle of her father's face, thrilled to the heart by this strange mystery of his words reached forth her arms, and fell trembling on her lover's breast.

Paul bowed his head upon his breast and gathered her to his heart, while his frame shook with an agitation like madness.

“Look up my love!” he said in a deep whisper, “we are married in the sight of God. No earthly hand shall tear you from my heart!”

This was a scene calculated to strike the heart with wonder and awe.

Here the dimly lighted saloon, thronged by the startled wedding-guests, who stood with pale faces and wondering looks, gazing upon the figures in the next room. Not a word was spoken; a dead silence rested upon the place.

There, thrown into view by the light of the wax candles, stood the Priest, starting aside with half-raised hands, as his dilating eye was fixed upon the prostrate form of the Merchant Prince. That man of enormous wealth lay huddled on the floor, like a bundle of his own goods, shapeless and insensible.

There beyond the altar, his proud form towering in its full stature, stood Paul Mount-Laurel, with downcast head and eyes chained to the face of the young girl, who with her arms hanging stiffly by her side and her eyelids closed as if in death, lay insensible upon his breast, girdled by the firm embrace of his manly arms. No one beheld his face, for his chesnut hair fell over his brow, but every eye saw that muscular chest heaving beneath the pressure of the young girl's form, now half-hidden by the wild disorder of her unloosened hair.

CHAPTER FIFTH.

THE BANK PRESIDENT.

"A PERSON wishes to see you, Mr. Markham," whispered the servant in livery, "on very especial business."

Now these creatures who minister to the wants of wealth and station, these menials of an hour, have a vocabulary of their own. In this elegant dictionary a *gentleman*, means something well-dressed and corpulent in the purse, while a *person*, implies a distinct idea of rags and misery, or at all events a shabby coat and an empty pocket.

Therefore, when Mr. Markham gazing fondly upon the face of his beloved child, heard the whisper of the servant, he knew at once the rank of the individual who desired an interview. But the words—a very especial business—excited his curiosity, and he at once withdrew from the saloon, into the brilliantly lighted hall.

A young man stood there in the centre of the Mosaic floor, with the light of the hall lamp pouring strongly over his head. He was plainly dressed in a suit of black, varied by a snow-white collar, which was encircled by a dark ribbon. He stood with his hat in his hand, while his strongly-marked countenance moulded in all the firm regularity of an antique statue, was thrown boldly into light.

At a glance Mr. Markham saw that his dark frock coat, though fashioned of the finest cloth, was rendered rusty with use, while his shoes carefully patched, his clean shirt bosom darned in various places, his black pantaloons worn white at the seams, betrayed the poverty of the wearer.

Yet when he gazed in that bronzed face, with those large earnest eyes, flashing from beneath a massive brow, he at once forgot the poverty of his dress, and the unseasonable moment of his visit.

"You desire to see me, Sir?" he said quickly, playing with his watch seals.

"I do, Sir," replied the young man in a musical voice, "I would like to converse with you for a few minutes ——"

"I am at your service Sir; speak on!" said Mr. Markham with a polite smile.

"I am a tenant of yours. My name is Leon Longwood. I rent a small house in Front street of your agent, but in consequence of an unforeseen occurrence, I am unable to pay this month's rent ——"

As though a pall had been cast over his face, Mr. Markham's brow grew dark.

"See my agent Sir, see my agent," he said in a sharp tone, as he moved toward the door of the saloon.

"But Sir, your agent came to me to-day, he found death in my house. Yes, he beheld me sitting beside the corpse of a faithful friend, who had watched over me, toiled for me, served me like a slave for twenty-two years. He asked me for the rent; I could not pay him because every dollar I have in the world, will be demanded for the old man's funeral. I asked for a brief delay, only a week to raise ten dollars, and what was your agent's reply? 'Unless you pay me by to-morrow morning, I will trundle you and your paltry books and your friend's dead body into the street!' These were his words sir, and he claims to be called a man. I have come to you—not for redress against a creature so utterly base—but simply to ask you for a week's delay, for ——"

His eye flashing, his right hand moving in energetic gesticulation, he drew nearer to the Merchant's side, while his voice alternately trembled with anger entreaty and scorn.

"I must refer you to my agent Sir," was the quick reply of Mr. Markham. "I have lost a great deal lately by dishonest tenants, and cannot interfere between my agent and his duty. Here William, shew this person to the door ——"

For a moment the young man stood with his head downcast, while his fingers played listlessly with the rim of his hat. At last he raised his eyes; one glance he bestowed upon the Merchant; it was not to use too bold a figure—the very lightning of scorn.

Then while his chest heaved, and his nether lip was pressed between his teeth, he slowly turned upon his heel and retreated toward the hall door.

That glance thrilled Mr. Markham to the heart; his good-humored face wore an expression of blank astonishment, while he stood absently playing with his watch seals.

Again that voice echoed through the hall. Mr. Markham looked up and beheld Leon Longwood gazing upon him, while his marked face stamped with incarnate scorn, was turned over his shoulder.

"Poor thing of an hour!" he said with that withering look, "You are rich *now*; I am poor. But my day will come. If I ever forget this moment, may ——"

He lifted his right hand to heaven, while his lips moved but uttered no audible word.

The merchant shuddered. There was something terrible in that uplifted hand, that bronzed face stamped with a deep emotion; something fearful in that oath, uttered by soundless lips, as though sacred from all but God.

The merchant shuddered and turned his eyes away, but when he looked again for the young man, he was gone.

"Excellent friend Markham, excellent," cried a deep sonorous voice, "I have been an unexpected witness of this scene; it pleases me to see you so determined. Unless we landlords combine, these beggarly tenants will fleece us out of our lives!"

As this voice was heard, the form of Calvin Wolfe was seen advancing from the shadows near the hall door. His cloak was negligently flung over his right shoulder, while his white cravat threw his dark-hued visage into light, revealing the peculiar expression of the nether lip, the cold glassy lustre of the large grey eyes.

"Ah—my dear Mr. Wolfe, I am glad to see you," cried the Merchant Prince, advancing with a bound and seizing his friend, with both hands: "You are just in time to join us. It is my daughter's wedding night, you know. You received an invitation? Of course you did—this is an unexpected pleasure ——"

"The fact is my dear friend," said Wolfe in a slow deliberate voice, "I came to see you on business ——"

Markham's countenance fell.

—"To see you alone on business, my friend," continued Wolfe, as his glassy eyes emitted a momentary gleam of light.

Markham silently took a candle from a side-table, and led the way up the wide and carpeted stairs, into a small room on the second floor, opposite the Bridal-Chamber of his daughter.

Placing the light on a table, he motioned Wolfe to a chair. This gentleman flung his cloak on the back of the arm-chair, and seated himself on its velvet cushion.

"This is comfortable" he said, holding his hands towards the air-tight wood stove, while with a hasty glance he surveyed the apartment.

It was a small chamber with a lofty ceiling, and shelves placed along its walls, leaving space only for the door and the stove. These shelves crowded with books and papers, were half-concealed by thick curtains, dark in color, which trailed almost from the ceiling to the floor. Between the topmost shelf of each range and the ceiling, was placed a bust of marble, its white features glaring in the light, like the face of a ghost.

Wolfe and Markham were seated on the opposite sides of a large table, covered with dark green cloth, in the centre of which the candle was placed, with a mass of letters scattered near it, bearing the post-marks of the principal cities of the Union.

"Comfortable place this," exclaimed Calvin Wolfe with a yawn, "Bye-the-bye Markham, what do you call *that*?" pointing to one of the marble busts.

"That is a head of the Saviour, by Thorwaldsen," coolly replied Markham, while a slight flush passed over his face.

"Head of the Saviour—Bah! Catholic stuff! Don't you know Markham, we did away with this Image-worship at the time of the Reformation?"

"I am a Catholic," calmly replied Markham.

"Oh, you are? Well I have heard so, but I forgot the circumstance. Those other heads?"

"That is a head of St. Ignatius Loyala, and that of St. Francis Xavier," exclaimed Markham, his brow growing as red as his cheeks.

"*Jesuits*—bah!" exclaimed Wolfe, thrusting forward his under lip. "But I don't mean to hurt any of your little prejudices. Soh—let's to business."

His glassy eyes lit up with a sudden fire.

"To-morrow Markham," he said with cool deliberate emphasis, as though each word was worth a fortune, "Your note in my favor, for three hundred thousand dollars, falls due at the FREEMAN'S BANK."

Markham half rose from his seat and then sank back again, while the color went and came on his cheeks with a sudden alternation of crimson and snow.

"I thought, Mr. Wolfe," he hesitated, "that you promised me six month's extension on this note? Do you not remember such a promise made in the President's room of your bank, a week ago?"

"I do! But business is business my dear friend," replied Wolfe, leaning over the table. "You will remember that I took this money six months ago, out of the vaults of the bank on my own responsibility, and loaned it to you, on your note. The bank is pressed for money; your note is due to-morrow. It becomes my duty, my dear Markham to *request* its payment, or else it must be *protested*!"

Markham started to his feet.

"What!" he said in a hissing tone, "The paper of Xavier Markham *protested*!"

As if astonished at his want of self-command he sank back again, and said in a calm tone:

"It will pinch me Wolfe, but it shall be done. Here are three letters, one from my agent in Charleston, one from my agent in New York, and this from my agent in Boston. They doubtless contain satisfactory information with regard to my affairs, or drafts which will aid me in paying your note. You know I sent one hundred and fifty thousand dollars worth of cotton to Liverpool from Charleston, this spring by the ship Marie Markham, and the same amount in flour from New York, by the ship Xavier. It was your note that enabled me to do this; I now hold in my hands the intelligence of the safe arrival of these ships, with their return cargoes——"

As in this confident manner Markham spoke of his resources, Wolfe examined his face with a cautious and searching glance. He even shaded his eyes with his uplifted hand.

Markham drew forth his gold spectacles from their tortoise-shell case, and opened the letter from Charleston.

"Ah—his countenance changes," muttered Wolfe, "his nether lip falls, he trembles! He is mine!"

This was the letter:

CHARLESTON, APRIL 25, 1844.

DEAR SIR :

As the mail is about to close, I am informed that your ship, the *Marie Markham*, was destroyed by fire at sea, on the night of April 20th.

Yours in haste, C. K. PLAINFIELD,

Agent for X. Markham, in Charleston.

Markham silently crushed the letter into his pocket, without a word.

"Two hundred thousand dollars gone!" muttered Wolfe, gazing at his face.

Silently Markham opened the New York letter.

"Again his countenance changes," muttered Wolfe; "In fact it is positively horrible—those starting eyes, that fallen jaw, that face—bah! It's white as a sheet. Is he going to fall? No! He takes up the Boston letter——"

Here are the words of the New York letter :

NEW YORK, MAY 1, 1844.

DEAR SIR :

The *Xavier* foundered at sea, on the 28th inst. The crew and passengers—with the exception of two persons—were taken up by the Steamer, now in the harbor, from Liverpool—the morning mail is about to close—I can add no more—

J. C. BYRD,

Agent for the house of Markham, New York.

"Three hundred thousand dollars gone!" muttered Wolfe—"Ah—he is reading the Boston letter—hallo! What's this!"

Markham sprang from his chair, and fell forward with his face on the table, his limbs quivering as with a spasm, while the last letter fell from his stiffened fingers.

Wolfe rushed forward, placed the fainting man in his chair again, and shook him violently by the arms.

Markham was a ghastly spectacle.

He sat there in the chair like an inanimate mass, without the power of volition, his face changed from its cheerful hue of health to a livid blue, while his fallen jaw and glassy eyes gave him an expression at once idiotic and horrible.

"Hallo!" shouted Wolfe, applying his mouth to the ear of the wretched man, "What's all this—what's the matter? Eh?"

"Read!" gasped Markham, pulling the first two letters from his pocket, and pointing to the last which lay opened on the table.

Wolfe seized the Boston letter, and with a glance perused its contents :

BOSTON, APRIL 30, 1844.

DEAR SIR :

The house of Malcolm & Roberts, whose note to you for \$100,000 comes due to-day, failed yesterday. I thought it proper to forward you the earliest information of this fact, and therefore have only time to subscribe myself—

BENJ. COLBERT.

Agt. house of Markham, in Boston.

"Six hundred thousand dollars gone at one sweep!" was the cool remark of Wolfe. "However its no surprise to me; my letters by this evening's mail gave me all requisite information, or——" projecting his under lip with that singular smile—"I would not have pressed my *little* note——Hallo! Markham; cheer up; it is not so bad as you think; cheer up my man! There—he's gone again!"

As Markham sank back insensible in his chair, Wolfe stood gazing upon him with folded arms. His cold glassy eye glared with wild light; that solitary vein stood out, dark and distinct from the centre of his lofty brow. His look, his attitude, his whole appearance were Satanic, as he contemplated the insensible form before him.

"This morning he was the MERCHANT PRINCE! So they style these fellows whom we RAG BARONS mould under our thumbs! Now, he is the broken merchant, the *dishonest speculator*—bah! It makes me laugh. These *Merchant Princes*, what are they but our willing slaves? They halloo for us, uphold us in the papers, vote for us at elections, and we, the RAG ARISTOCRACY with their own money and a few millions from the government *on deposit*, rule them with a rod of iron. Yes, we flood the cities with specie, silver and gold at our pleasure; or else we raise a hue and cry about the "Currency" the "Tariff," or anything else that may serve our turn—and lo! The country is declared in a state of Panic. Credit is destroyed; confidence lost. From the Aroostook to the Sabine, this great Union is convulsed like an idiot, seized with an epileptic fit."

He strode along the floor tossing his arms aloft, as he continued:

"And we do all this, we the Rag Aristocracy of the Banks! We first create the ruin and then reap the harvest. Talk of their Democracy, what is it, so long as we hold the Veto of Starvation over the People? They pass a law in Congress that we do not like; we veto that law. How? Manufacturers are indebted to us in every city of the Union. Either discharge your laborers by hundreds and thousands, in order to create a panic, or we will *protest your paper!*"

He stood with his arms folded over his breast, while his eyes flashed with triumph and scorn:

"A panic is created The members of Congress who voted against us,

never return to Congress again. We supply their places with *our men*. We, the Banks do this and veto We the People!"

For a moment his head was drooped upon his breast:

"*He was a man!*" Well I remember the day we waited upon him. He sat there, in his arm-chair—I can see that stern old warrior face, with its snow-white hair, even now. We told him of the public distress—the manufacturers ruined—the eagles shrouded in crape, which were borne at the head of twenty thousand men into Independence square. He heard us all. We begged him to leave the deposits where they were; to uphold the GREAT BANK at Philadelphia. Still he did not say a word. At last one of our number, more fiery than the rest, intimated that if THE BANK were crushed, a *rebellion* might follow. Then the old man rose—I can see him yet! 'Come!' he shouted in a voice of thunder, as his clenched right hand was raised above his white hairs—'Come with bayonets in your hands, instead of petitions—surround the White House with your legions—I am ready for you all! By the Eternal! With the People at my back, the honest yeomanry whom your gold can neither buy nor awe, I will string you up around the Capitol, each rebel of you—on a gibbet—high as Haman's!' "

"I can see the old man yet, his flashing eye and snow-white hair! But I must confess that we left his chamber with another idea of his character, than we had ever entertained before. In fact whipped dogs with their tails between their legs, could not have looked more ridiculous."

A smile passed over the Bank President's face:

"It is good for us, that not more than one ANDREW JACKSON, is born in a century!"

—When I think of that ONE MAN standing there at Washington, battling against all the power of Bank and Panic combined, betrayed by those in whom he trusted, assailed by all that the snake of malice could hiss, or the fiend of falsehood howl, when I think of that ONE MAN placing his back against the rock and folding his arms for the blow, while he uttered his awful vow, 'By the Eternal I will not swerve one inch from the course which I have chosen!'—I must confess that the records of Greece and Rome, nay, the proudest days of Cromwell or Napoleon cannot furnish an instance of a WILL like that of Andrew Jackson, when he placed life and soul and fame, on the hazard of a die, for the People's welfare.—

"He destroyed THE BANK," exclaimed Wolfe striding to and fro, "But in place of the great monster, a thousand have sprung from its dead body. Where is the Andrew Jackson to destroy these smaller monsters, who control the destiny of every city, town, hamlet, in the Union?"

No words can express the tone of mockery, in which this was spoken.

"Now here is a *father*," he exclaimed, pointing to the insensible form of Markham; "a Christian too, so far as a Papist Idolator can be a Christian. I will take this man in my fingers, I, the Bank President, and mould

him to my purposes, like a piece of wax in a baby's fingers. I can relieve him now, rescue him from bankruptcy, place him on his feet again, as the Merchant Prince. Will I do it? Yes—if he *pays my price*.”

Taking a handkerchief from his pocket, he placed it over the mouth and nostrils of the insensible man. In a moment Markham opened his eyes, and gazed wonderingly around.

“Marie—Xavier—ah! Six hundred thousand dollars—Say Wolfe, tell me, is it a dream?”

“Bah!” growled Wolfe, pressing the hands of the miserable man in his own; “Come—rouse yourself. Be a man. By one of those unavoidable concurrence of circumstances which prostrate the bravest General on the battle-field, the greatest monarch on his throne, destroying the hopes of years in an hour, you have been hurried to the verge of ruin——”

As he uttered this sententious remark in a calm deliberate tone, Markham began to recover his wandering reason.

“You are on the verge of Bankruptcy, Xavier,” said Wolfe in a kind tone, “But remember the edge of a cliff is not the base. To stand there, is not to be crushed to pieces against the rocks below. Look up Markham, and hope! *I can save you!*”

“You save me, you!” shrieked Xavier, starting up and clutching Wolfe by the hands. “Do it—do it—only rescue me from this ruin, and you will receive my eternal gratitude!”

“It depends entirely Xavier upon what form your ‘eternal gratitude’ may assume.”

Wolfe centred his flashing eyes upon the livid face of Markham, as he spoke these emphatic words.

“Name your condition Calvin, name your condition,”—faltering the Merchant.

“In the first place, let us consider this question,” exclaimed Wolfe, drawing his chair to Markham’s side, “What is it to be a Bankrupt. Not much you will say, in the case of one half the merchants of the present day, but to you, Markham, to you——”

“Ah spare me, Calvin, spare me——” whispered Markham, hiding his face in his hands.

“To you Markham, who bear a name honored by the great mercantile renown of your father, a name, which in the Revolution, was known all over the world, a proverb for integrity, a name which shone brightest in the Panic of ’33 and ’34, a name which in the crash of ’37, was honored by the great houses of London, Liverpool, Paris, while almost every other American house was scorned—a name in fact——”

“Wolfe you will drive me mad!” shrieked Markham, tearing his cravat from his neck, as if in the effort to breathe.

“Imagine this name *Bankrupt!* For, look you, my dear friend, this note once *protested*, all your other creditors will take the alarm. Other notes

that you could pay, with a *little time*, will fall due in a day or so. These will be made the instruments of your ruin. Misfortunes never come single—you know the good old saw? In short, the moment it is known that this note is protested, that moment, the name of Markham is *bankrupt*! Its owner pointed at in the streets, 'there goes *poor* Markham!' Scoffed on 'Change, derided in the papers, as a monument of human weakness, nay brought to the bar of a Court, as a *Fraudulent Insolvent*!"

This last word crushed poor Markham like the weight of a rock hurled on his brain, from some dizzy height.

He fell forward on the table, with his face to the cloth.

"Come," cried Wolfe, raising him up again, and holding his trembling body in the chair, while he gazed steadily in his face; "Come, Markham, you must hear me out. Confess at once, that sooner than endure all this scorn, the loss of friends and home, sooner than exchange this princely mansion for the gloomy confines of a jail, you would have recourse to the weapons of the—*SUICIDE*!"

"Have you pistols with you?" asked Markham, in a husky whisper, while his trembling lips fell apart with an idiotic expression.

"But," continued Wolfe, in that deep voice which thrilled the blood, "*Your soul, Xavier, YOUR SOUL*!"

"Ah—it is horrible! I would be lost forever—I cannot do it!" And Markham quivered from head to foot.

"*He cannot be one of the ELECT, or else he would not fear for his soul,*" slowly muttered Wolfe, as he gazed upon the livid face of the desperate man before him.

Let us remember that expression. It may reveal the cause of many a dread secret in these Revelations. Imagine a man of strong mind, immense wealth and much outward piety, firmly believing that whatever crime he may commit, whatever blasphemy he may enact, yet still he cannot sin, for he is one of the Elect of God.

Imagine this case and you will have in brief words, the case and creed of Calvin Wolfe.

What picture of a fiend in human form, could be half so terrible as this?

"Therefore, Xavier Markham, as you can neither accept the disgrace of Bankruptcy, nor the eternal doom of the suicide, hear my proposition. On one condition, on one only, will I save you."

A ray of hope shone from Markham's pale face, but in a moment his woven brows and compressed lips expressed distrust. "He wishes to swindle me out of half of my remaining fortune!" the thought flashed over his mind.

"This is your case. You have real estate in lands and houses to the amount of Three hundred thousand dollars—a coal mine worth at least five hundred thousand—stock in various corporations valued at fifty thousand. Yet all these together, would not on the brief time allotted you, save you

from ruin ; all these together, by mortgage or by a hasty sale, would not bring three hundred thousand dollars. Is this true ?”

Markham silently nodded his head.

“ Now I will advance the money from my own pocket, or take the responsibility of using the funds of the bank, for you, on one condition ——”

Markham fancied that that small library room grew terribly silent, even as the deep voice of Wolfe rung in his ears. He gazed upon that high brow, darkened by a single prominent vein, with a shudder. He knew not why, but it seemed to him, that a horrible light flashed from those eyes, which he had never seen before, save when covered with a glassy film.

“ Your condition ——” gasped Markham.

“ You have a daughter ——” whispered Wolfe.

Markham moved uneasily in his chair.

“ Fair, young and beautiful ——” continued Wolfe.

Markham looked wildly into his face, and laid his trembling hand upon the muscular arm of the Bank President.

“ Fair, young and beautiful. In fact, all that can excite a father’s pride, or a—*husband’s love* !”

Markham uttered a faint groan. Had not his hands rested against the breast of Wolfe, he would have fallen to the floor.

“ This daughter is to be married to night,” Wolfe continued in that same deep whisper : “ Even now she stands before the Bridal altar. Even now the eyes of the wedding guests are turned to the door, while they wonder at your absence ——”

“ O !” shrieked Markham, uttering in one impassioned burst, the name of Almighty God ; “ Why do I not fall dead ?”

“ This daughter, so young, so beautiful,” continued Wolfe, dwelling on each word with deep emphasis, “ This daughter, now waiting to clasp her youthful Bridegroom to her arms, to-morrow, at the hour of three, at the very moment when your note for three hundred thousand dollars, will be paid by me, must cling to the breast of *another Bridegroom* ! That is my condition.”

Markham slid slowly from the chair, and lay crouching on the floor, his livid face upraised towards the dark countenance of Wolfe.

“ In one word, to-morrow at three o’clock she must be my wife !”

“ No—No !” shrieked Markham, lifting his clasped hands above his head, “ Sooner disgrace—dishonor—death ——”

Wolfe slowly arose ; an expression of scorn, frightful to behold, passed over his face.

“ Bah ! This Fraudulent Insolvent disgusts me !” he exclaimed in bitter mockery.

Not thirty minutes ago this Merchant Prince, now grovelling on the floor at the feet of the Bank President, had refused a delay of one week to a poor debtor, who owed him ten dollars, yes, by his actions he had con-

firmed the mandate of his brutal agent, who said 'Pay me this rent or I will trundle the dead body of the old man, your friend into the street.'

The last sneer of Wolfe cut into his soul, like a poisoned arrow.

"Yes, this Fraudulent Insolvent is an object more of contempt than pity!" exclaimed Wolfe, turning away as he placed his hat upon his head. "I will leave him to his fate. To-morrow his note will be presented, and dishonored. That is not much. The next day he will be arrested for fraud, hurled into gaol; that is not hard to bear. His furniture will be sold by the sheriff, this goodly mansion ring with the obscene jests of the mob——"

As he stood with his face to the door, his finger on the lock, a hand was laid on his shoulder.

He turned and beheld Markham standing by his side, his face more like the face of a corpse than a living man. There were livid circles of blue under each eye; his lips were white, his eyeballs glared from the expanded lids.

"I consent," he said in that voice, husky as with the touch of death. "Save me—at three o'clock to-morrow, my daughter shall be yours."

"That is reasonable my friend," coolly replied Wolfe, rattling the knob of the door.

"But——" hesitated Markham, in that same hollow voice, "You have a wife?"

"A separated woman; she shall be divorced soon. The marriage you know can be private. Did I worship at—*Mass!* the Pope would settle this little matter for me!"

"Oh, my poor child!" quivered from the livid lips of Markham. "Why have I not courage to plunge a dagger in your heart?"

He said this, and with a tottering step rushed from the room. Wolfe heard his footsteps on the stairs, and then all was still.

Without a word the Bank President extinguished the light, placed an arm-chair in the shadow opposite the door, and then gazed out upon the lighted hall.

The door of the Bridal Chamber, you will remember was directly opposite. Wolfe listened for the faintest sound.

For a few moments all was still, but suddenly there came a faint cry, the sound of hurried footsteps, a wild murmur swelling through that proud mansion, like the knell of death.

Then the sound of footsteps on the stairs, and then—Wolfe felt his blood dance in his veins—the Bridegroom, so magnificent in face and form came rushing up the stairs bearing the Bride, pale and insensible on his manly bosom.

For a moment Paul stood before the door of the Bridal Chamber, gazing upon that young face illumined by the glare of the chandelier, with the dark brown hair falling over the shoulders.

Wolfe beheld it also, but with a smile and a brief ejaculation :

"To-morrow, ah, ha ! to-morrow !"

Paul pushed open the door of the Bridal Chamber. Wolfe who beheld him from the darkness of the library room, started to his feet.

He saw Paul bear her along that chamber, and lay her gently on the bed. He saw him bend over her inanimate form, he heard the echo of that kiss.

Then, while the blood coursed in his veins like living fire, he beheld the Bridegroom emerge from the chamber, stand for a moment with his noble face stamped with an inexpressible agony, and then—even in an instant—he was gone.

"To-morrow," chuckled Wolfe, wrapping his cloak about his face, "Ah—ha—to-morrow !"

He hurried down stairs. The hall below was crowded with the startled guests, hastily resuming their hats and cloaks, whispering together in groups, and pointing with affrighted looks to the wedding room. Wolfe passed through them all, without a word. No one saw his face ; no one knew his tall form.

As he passed the door of the wedding room, the insensible form of Markham was borne along the hall, by the hands of liveried servants. His livid face was turned up to the light with the eyeballs set as if in death, while his arms hung down, and his stiffened fingers swept the carpet of the hall.

"He will not die !" muttered Wolfe, as he strode toward the front door ; "Men that can faint and cry, don't die so easily as that !"

In a moment he stood upon the steps before the door, gazing upon the moon, which half veiled by the chill mists that now arose from the moist earth, shone dimly over the tall mansions of Arch street.

"He will not die," muttered Wolfe, "It will go hard with him, but he will not die !"

And with these words he went on his way.

Wrapped in various and exciting thoughts he pursued his path, moving forward with heavy and measured strides, until he stood at the corner of Seventh and Carpenter. This latter street as every citizen knows, extends from Sixth to Seventh street, in the rear of the Arcade and Chesnut street theatre.

Dimly lighted at all times, it was now rendered dark and obscure, by the thick mist which arose from the moist pavements. A solitary gas lamp standing in the rear of the Arcade, shone through the gathering fog, with the faint glare of a farthing candle.

Absorbed in his reflections, Calvin Wolfe turned down the gloomy street ; he passed the solitary light, which but dimly revealed the arches of the Arcade, echoing with the tread of footsteps, the hum of business ; he stood in the shadow of that huge blank wall, which forms the rear of the Chesnut street Theatre.

An object arrested his attention ; for a moment Calvin turned his glance

aside and beheld a form crouching on the curb, and searching with eager hands among a heap of oyster shells, which had been thrown from the kitchen of a neighboring refectory.

Yes, it was a man who crouched there, picking with nervous eagerness the oyster shells in search of some nauseous fragment, to appease his hunger. Calvin bent down over his shoulder, without being seen by the ragged wretch, and saw him scrape the shells with his quivering fingers, and rapidly convey the miserable spoil of the gutter to his mouth. He could not see his face, for a battered hat was crushed over his eyes.

"He has not eaten food for two days!" was the cool whisper of Calvin, as he turned quietly from the starving man, and pursued his way.

"Let me see," he muttered as passing in the shadow of the lofty wall, he approached Sixth street, while the fog gathered more thickly around him; "I have not seen him now for more than a year. The last time I heard of him, he was the owner of a gambling hell. I need his assistance now; he is a needy dog and for a little money would——"

The words died away in a murmur of surprise. In the same moment the Bank President heard a sudden footstep, felt an arm wound about his throat from behind, and saw the gleam of a knife before his very eyes. With a quick movement of his arm he dashed the knife aside, and then shaking the arm from his throat, he turned and clutched the assassin.

It was the poor wretch who the moment before sat on the curbstone, picking a loathsome meal from the rubbish of the street.

As Calvin seized him by the throat, the knife fell on the pavement with a ringing sound.

"Oh—ho! My good friend, and so you would steal up behind a respectable man, and stab him in the dark would you? What do you think such a course of conduct will do for you, my good friend?"

Thus speaking, in a tone of bitter mockery, he dragged the Assassin forward, until they stood in the full glare of the gas lamp, at the corner of Sixth and Carpenter street.

"Ah—ha!" he shouted, with a burst of laughter, as clutching the throat of his prisoner with one hand, he tore the hat from his eyes with the other: "My good friend Malachi, as I'm a sinner!"

His slender form shivering in rags, his hideous face, sunken in the cheeks, with the large dark eyes glaring in their red circles, from beneath the projecting brow, Malachi raised his hands as if to prevent the grasp of Wolfe from strangling him. A hollow, gurgling groan came from his purple lips.

"Are you hungry, Malachi?" said Wolfe, in a bland whisper. "Does your active fancy roam over visions of roast turkey, beefsteaks or fried oysters? Do you thirst, Malachi? Will champagne, or cogniac, or old hock soothe your delicate palate?"

He shook the trembling wretch in his iron grasp, as he hissed these sneering words in his ears.

"Wolfe—bread—bread—" gasped Malachi, in a voice as hollow as the accents of a man, who has gone through all the agonies of starvation—"Have—not—eaten—two days!"

"O, you are joking, Malachi! You, the speculator, you, the gambler, you, the blood of Chesnut street, you, without food for two days! Bah!"

The poor wretch clasped his hands nervously together, while a large tear rolled slowly from the red circle of each eye.

"Come—Malachi—be candid—what would you give for a good dinner?"

Malachi muttered a single word, clutching his feverish hands, while his eyes shone with unnatural lustre.

"Devil!" he gasped, making an effort—faint and impotent you may be sure—to free himself from the grasp of Wolfe.

"Now witness me, O, God!" exclaimed the Bank President, as a sudden change came over his face, while his glassy eye emitted that wild light, which betokened strong emotion; "Here, in my grasp I hold this starving wretch this miserable vagrant, whom want and crime have driven to feed on the offal of the public streets! Yet I will take him as he is, starving and in rags, I will dedicate him to a high and holy work, yes, with this poor creature, I will shake society to its foundations, array man against man, brother against brother, until the whole nation shall be roused to a knowledge of **THE TRUTH**: in one word, out of this miserable criminal, now craving but a morsel of bread, I will shape a bold and eloquent expounder of **THE CAUSE**!"

He took the name of God once more upon his lips, while—dilating in every inch of his stature—he stood there, enveloped in the fog, one hand raised to heaven, as the other clutched the throat of the starving wretch.

An expression almost holy came over the Bank President's face, as he murmured in a deep sonorous voice, that word—**THE CAUSE**! Yet the next moment, his upper lip was pressed against his teeth again, while the lower projected in a mocking sneer, his eye flashed with deadly lustre, that solitary vein swelled black and prominent from his brow.

Malachi sank slowly down upon the pavement, his head falling over the wrist of Wolfe, as his throat was enclosed by that iron grasp. He hung there like a dead man; had it not been for the arm of the Bank President, he would have fallen upon the cold bricks of the pavement.

Half strangled by that suffocating grasp, assailed by fear, by cold, by hunger, all at once, Malachi lay there, without sense or motion.

Towering above the mansions of Front street, the house of the Bank President, by its imposing exterior, manifested the wealth and position of its owner.

Picture a mansion three stories high, with its dusky and time-darkened

THE BANK PRESIDENT.

brick, varied by the sculptured marble of the window frames and hall door, while the heavy cornices above, the steep roof, with its row of straight, formal dormer windows, gives you an idea of the antiquity of the edifice.

Yes, notwithstanding those window frames of glaring marble, the lofty hall door, with its massy white pillars, the range of steps which lead from its threshold to the pavement, all bearing the evidence of modern taste, you behold at a glance, the marks of the olden time upon the broad face of this princely mansion.

On one side extend a row of houses, various in size and appearance, some two, some three stories high, all wearing that same time-honored duskiness of look. Adjoining the Bank President's mansion, is a two story house, with bricks of alternate black and red, closed window shutters and steep roof, dotted with clumps of moss.

The good citizens of the neighborhood, who make mischief and marriages for this fine old quarter of the city, have never seen those shutters unclosed. Once every day, an old man bent double with age, issues from that narrow door, with its rusted knocker and worm-eaten panels; once a day, a young man, poorly clad, with a bronzed face and deep dark eyes, is seen to emerge from that threshold, pass down the street, without turning his gaze to the right or left, or speaking to a human being. Sometimes when he returns, he has a bundle of old books gathered under his arms, and then, all night long, a ray of light steals out from some crevice in the closed shutters, giving evidence of the lonely virgil of a student, the solitary watch held by a friendless scholar, who converses with the spirits of the dead.

On the other side of the mansion, extends a massive brick wall, which veils the garden of the Bank President from all impertinent eyes. It is said to be a lovely place, with winding walks, trailing among beds of flowers, grape vines budding greenly over lofty arbors, fountains dashing in the light, from amid forms of marble. So the rumor goes, but no vulgar eye looks upon its secrets, for the Bank President, and his especial friends wander there alone, under the shade of these towering trees, which rising over the wall, torment the eyes of the good people on the opposite side of the street.

Down the massive steps of the hall door, once or perhaps twice a month, a beautiful girl,—shrouded in a black dress, which gives additional effect to her dark eyes, overarched by pencilled brows, her dark hair laid plainly aside, over a calm, clear forehead,—is seen descending, supported by the arm of Calvin Wolfe. His hands lift her into the carriage, drawn by magnificent black horses and ornamented with his coat of arms. He enters after her; the carriage whirls away, and after a time returns, when the beautiful girl is seen to issue from its door, assisted by the same arm, and pass again into the Bank President's mansion, where she remains for another month.

No other woman's form is ever seen to pass the threshold of that door.

It is said this beautiful girl is Calvin's daughter, but the neighbors doubt

it sadly, while the Oldest Inhabitant, that near cousin of the Wandering Jew, who lives a few rods down the street, affirms with all manner of node, that he might tell something, if he would, and accordingly he never does.

This girl is never attended by any one but the Bank President.

Once and once only, having handed her into the carriage, he passed into the house again, in search of something which he had forgotten. At that moment, the Student burdened with books, was on the threshold of his door. The face of the young girl looked from the window; her eye glanced from side to side in search of her glove, which had fallen to the pavement. The Student beheld that face, dashed his books on the pavement, sprang forward, seized the glove, and was in the act of presenting it to the maiden, when Calvin Wolfe appeared in the hall door.

His brow grew black as a thunder cloud: he did not see the warm flush which stole over the girl's face, as her eyes encountered the earnest gaze of the young man, or he would have crushed the Student into the gutter, beneath the carriage wheels. But he saw the young man standing there, in the act of presenting the glove with a polite bow, he saw the girl's face bending from the carriage window, while her small white hand was extended towards the Student: the black vein swelled on the Bank President's forehead.

Silently he passed down the steps; they did not perceive him. He rapidly advanced, seized the glove, flung it through the window, almost in the maiden's face, and then leaped into the carriage.

As the Student stood stricken dumb and motionless with surprise, Wolfe's face, with the glassy eyes and projecting underlip, appeared in the carriage window.

"Here fellow, is something for your trouble," he cried, flinging a silver dollar on the pavement.

As though his heart's blood had rushed into his face, silent flushed, trembling, that young man stood, while his brain swam in a fearful vertigo. Wounded self-respect, scorn and amazement, were stamped upon his crimsoned countenance. When his eyesight became clear again, the carriage was gone, but the silver dollar shone there at his feet. His face became deathly pale, then burning red again, as he gazed upon it. At last, while a convulsive motion was perceptible at his throat, he stooped down and grasped the glittering coin, clutching it in his trembling fingers, as a starving man clutches a piece of bread.

"I accept this dollar!" he said, with a smile that was frightful to behold, while his dark eyes blazed with a wild, unnatural glare, "Wo unto you, when the hour comes for me to give it to you again!"

Passing along the pavement with a trembling step, he gathered up his books and entered his lonely home.

This incident, witnessed in part, by numerous gossips, who from the shadows of their blinds watched for the appearance of the Bank President and

THE BANK PRESIDENT.

the maiden, created an immense sensation in the neighborhood. Even the Oldest Inhabitant had never seen anything like it.

The lofty mansion was now shrouded in the thick mist, which rising from the river, lay over the roofs and along the streets, like an immense winding sheet.

The rolling of wheels was heard, and presently a cab stopped before the Bank President's door. In a moment Calvin Wolfe sprang out upon the pavement, bearing an insensible form upon his shoulders. He flung a dollar to the cabman, and then dragging the ragged form up the marble steps, he opened the door with a night key, and disappeared.

Presently a tall female form, enveloped in the thick folds of a cloak, stole cautiously along the pavement, drawing the veil more closely over her face, looked hastily from side to side as if she feared observation, ascended the steps, and pushed open the hall door. Calvin had forgotten to close it. With an eager bound the woman passed the threshold, and the door closed without a sound.

For a few moments silence prevailed along the street. Presently a foot-step was heard, and the form of a man emerged from the fog, bearing a dark object on his shoulder. A large gas lamp, standing on the curb in front of the Bank President's mansion, flung a dismal light through the folds of the mist. In that uncertain light, the new comer was seen standing at the door of the Student's house, while the dark object on his shoulder, assumed the distinct outlines of a coffin. For a moment, a face was turned toward the light, a bronzed face, with a massive brow and gleaming eyes, and then the young man, with his burden, disappeared into the Student's home. As the door closed, a wild, half-smothered cry of agony, broke on the silence of the street.

Meanwhile, unclosing his eyes, Malachi gazed in astonishment upon the scene which broke upon his recovered vision. He had fallen in a swoon, at the corner of the street, his body clad in rags, assailed by cold and thirst and hunger, and now recovering from his insensibility, he found himself reposing in a cushioned arm-chair, while the mirror opposite reflected his slender form, attired in a suit of glossy black, with a white cravat about his neck. That satin vest, that spotless shirt bosom—Malachi pinched his arms to assure himself that he was not dreaming.

He was seated in a small room comfortably furnished, pervaded by a cheering warmth, while the light above his head, shone over the table, covered with everything that might tempt the pallid taste of a gourmand. Malachi rubbed his eyes! It was but a scene from the Arabian Nights, he knew; he had fallen senseless on the curb, and like a starving man was now dreaming of a banquet that never had an existence.

Yet that respectably clad individual, whose tow-colored hair, bulging forehead, and dark eyes encircled by lines of crimson, were reflected in the opposite mirror? Who was he?

Malachi cast a glance over the banquet. Here was a sight for a starving man! A cold turkey flanked by dishes of fried oysters, guarded by solemn black bottles, labeled *Madeira*, while the back-ground of the scene was deliciously supplied with a confused panorama of sundry slices of cold ham, wide by side with broiled steaks, yet crimson with savory blood and mutton whops, hissing with a white heat, tender, juicy and delectable to look upon. It was a strange thing that Malachi beheld neither knife nor fork, for seizing a whole steak between his fingers he snatched it from the plate, and crammed it in his mouth, like another Fakir of Ava doing wonders for a large audience, who had each paid their half-a-dollar to see him perform.

"Take care Malachi, or the gravy will spoil your white cravat!" said a well-known voice, and a low chuckling laugh echoed around the room. Malachi with his mouth crammed with steak, and his fingers applied to the corners, jerked his head around; he beheld Wolfe standing at his shoulder, his head bent slightly forward, while his whole countenance was convulsed with mocking laughter.

Malachi did not utter a word; his mouth was full.

"Come—come, my friend, you must lay off your peculiar customs at this time. It is not customary with us, to feed in this carnivorous way."

With a sudden movement Wolfe tore the steak from the jaws of the famished man, and placed it out of his reach.

Malachi sprang to his feet, with all the despair of starvation written on his face.

"Come, come, my friend, don't be hasty," said Wolfe, taking a small basin of soup in one hand, while the other flourished a silver spoon; "after your long fast you must be moderate. Here Malachi, try some of this chicken soup—gently my friend, gently! Now some of this *Madeira*—touch your lips with it, only a taste Malachi! Why man you are a perfect wine-bibber; you toss the whole glass down your throat as though it was water. How do you feel now, Malachi?"

Tears, large and scalding tears, rolled down the cheeks of the famished man.

"By my father's soul Wolfe, but this is princely!" he said in a voice touched with some pathos.

"Of course you will have to pay for it Malachi," said Wolfe, protruding his under lip, while his glassy eyes emitted that cold light which betokened danger: "Consider yourself sold to me, as a mere bale of goods is sold, after this hour. I have bought you; you will have no reason to complain of the price. But mine you are, body and soul from this time, until the moment of your death. Obey me, and you shall live like a lord. I know your taste for wine, women and cards; they shall be gratified. But secretly

mind you ; in the dark mind you ; no open display of your profligate habits, will be tolerated by me. Betray me—ah ! If that were possible Malachi, you will wish yourself in the gutters of Carpenter street, picking oyster shells again, when my vengeance overtakes you."

The silver spoon fell from the trembling hand of Malachi. There was something frightful in the tone and look of Wolfe, as he bent down over his victim, and uttered the words we have recorded.

"Feed on my friend, but moderately, as you value your life," continued Wolfe, retreating towards a side door ; "After you have finished retire into the next room. Seat yourself on the arm-chair by the table, and peruse a paper, which you will find in the second volume of Calvin's Institutes. There you will find written ample directions with regard to your course, in the interview, which will take place in half an hour, between yourself and some of the most distinguished clergymen of the land. Feed on Malachi !"

With these words, commenced in a calm deliberate tone, and ending in a sneer, Wolfe left the room and hurried down the dimly lighted stairs. Pushing open a door, he entered the large room, which occupied the entire depth of the mansion, on the right of the hall-door.

It was a spacious apartment lighted by four windows, two facing the street and two the garden. A carpet from Smyrna covered the wide floor. The ceiling and the walls were hidden beneath dark papering, of a rich and antique pattern. The windows were curtained with folds of purple velvet, which when closed, enveloped the place in midnight gloom. The wonder of the apartment however, was the furniture which elicited the strongest ejaculations of surprise, from the select visitors of the Bank President. The chairs and sofas along the walls, the arm-chairs and tables in the centre of the room, the frames of the mirrors which reached from the ceiling to the floor between the windows, the massive mantel above the fireplace, were all fashioned in solid oak, carved into cumbrous and grotesque forms and bronzed and blackened by the hand of time.

This imparted a strange gloom to the place, even in the broad day, when the sun gleaming through the thick curtains shone over the rich mirrors, the velvet cushioned sofas, the carpet warm and gorgeous with the labor of oriental art.

But at night, when the antique chandelier lighted with gas, shed a dazzling lustre over the apartment, then each piece of furniture with its heavy mouldings, threw a dark and grotesque shadow over the carpet, or along the walls, which only rendered the place more sad and gloomy. The footstep of the intruder fell lightly on the threshold, as entering the door from the hall he started back, half frightened by the novelty of the sight.

The apartment was gloomy by day, when the sunshine warmed it with a cheerful glow, gloomier by night, when the chandelier filled it with strong light and deep shadows, but now as the Bank President passed its threshold, its appearance was calculated to thrill the heart with terror, with awe.

CHAPTER SIXTH.

THE MAD DOCTOR.

A solitary lamp shed a strong light around the oaken table on which it was placed, while the rest of that spacious apartment was enveloped in gloom.

Beside that table, leaning his cheek upon his hand, his slender form lost in the wide arm-chair, sat a man of some fifty years, his strongly marked countenance standing out in the light, from the surrounding gloom, like a bust of white marble from a background of ebony. His features were decidedly aquiline; the brow retreated, the nose long and slender projected with a strong curve, the lips thin and shrivelled shrunk away from his slight nostrils and firm round chin; his cheeks were sunken and hollow. His forehead not so much distinguished for its height as its breadth, was surmounted by thick masses of snow-white hair, which fell on either side in wavy flakes. His eyes large and grey, were shadowed by thick eyebrows as white as his hair. They shared the mild and placid expression of his thin and shrivelled lips.

This man so marked in countenance and expression, was clad in a neat black suit; his ruffled bosom as white as snow, was confined by a diamond of dazzling lustre; a small black cravat gathered around the upright collar, concealed the veins of his thin and withered neck.

His hands were of a pale yellowish hue, with long slender fingers and pointed nails. As one supported his sunken cheek, while the other traced figures on the surface of the table with the pointed nail, they looked more like the talons of a bird than the hands of a human being.

Around this singular figure, the grotesque mouldings of dark oak broke through the faint and dismal light, like the things of an enchanter's creation, awaiting his bidding to move or speak.

Calvin Wolfe paused on the threshold of the door, half-startled by this strange apparition.

At last advancing, he drew an oaken chair beside the table, and seated himself opposite the stranger.

"Well, Doctor," he whispered, glancing nervously from side to side, as though fearful of being overheard by a third person; "Is everything arranged?"

"I have fitted up the western wing of your mansion of Wolf-Eden* for

* In the original papers, from which this portion of the Revelations is extracted, the name of Wolfe's mansion is variously spelt or pointed, as Wolfeden, or Wolf-Eden, or again Wolfe-Eden.

the reception of the *patient*," answered the Doctor, in a mild, musical voice, while his pointed nail described a circle on the surface of the table.

"You understand our conditions, Doctor?" whispered Wolfe, drawing his chair nearer to the table; "Like most men of science, you are poor. Like most men of real genius, you are unknown. You have pursued your researches into medicine and surgery for the last twenty years, in almost utter obscurity. While the charlatan has prospered, heaped up his dishonest gains by thousands, you have often wanted for the crust of bread.—"

"It is true; it is true!" muttered the Doctor, sinking the sharp nails of one hand into the back of the other. "Had I money, had I money—ah, well! I *am* poor!"

"Now Sir, I come to you. I have confidence in your science, your intellect. I have money at my command; unlimited thousands if you please. I offer you the control of all my fortune, for your scientific researches, on one condition——"

"I remember it, I remember it!" absently murmured the Doctor; "You have a patient, whom you wish to entrust to my care. She is *insane*. Well, well, what of that? Insanity can be cured! Have I not devoted the days and nights of twenty years, to the study of this single branch of medical skill? Is it not a sublime research? To trace the dark and mysterious avenues of the Maniac's brain; to find the Soul hurled from its altar, into the Chaos of madness; to take that spark of Divinity, separate it from the dark thoughts which threaten its very life, or the terrible Monomania, which overspreads it like a mist of death, to lift that Soul upon its altar again, and bid it shine, as an emanation from Almighty God once more! Is it not sublime?"

Starting from the chair, that man of strange aspect, spread forth his talon hands, while his blue eyes shone with unutterable enthusiasm.

Wolfe shrank back, awed, almost terrified by the appearance of the singular being before him.

"Ah—he will serve my purpose, much better than a mere mercenary tool, for an Enthusiast can be led like a child, if you will only humor his fancy," he muttered, with a momentary gleam of light in his glassy eyes. "Come, Doctor, you enchant me!" he said, in a distinct whisper; "I can now more willingly trust this precious charge in your hands. What course of treatment do you intend to pursue, in regard to the *poor child*?"

As the Doctor, placing the forefinger of one hand upon the forefinger of the other, leaned forward to answer, a veiled form came slowly from the gloom of the apartment, with noiseless steps, stood for a moment contemplating the twain, and then disappeared in the shadows of the fireplace, within a few paces of Wolfe's chair.

Neither he nor the Doctor heard that form advance, nor did they behold that face, which gleaming with a thousand conflicting emotions, was for a moment thrust forth, from among the folds of the dark veil.

All was silent in the apartment; Wolfe sat with folded arms, waiting in keen suspense, for the Doctor's answer.

"The course of treatment will be peculiar," he slowly exclaimed. "You state that the Patient is neither a raving Maniac, nor a gloomy Monomaniac, but a helpless *Imbecile*. For the raving Maniac we have the lash, the chain, the straight jacket and the shower bath. To the *ONE DELUSION* of the Monomaniac, we oppose another delusion, as for instance, in the case of the man who fancied that he was called upon by Almighty God, to murder his wife, who he loved, his child, whom he adored. You have heard of this case?"

"Never!" responded Wolfe, with a look of inquiry.

"He was a man of high position, immense wealth, surrounded by a circle of admiring friends. His wife was lovely; his child beautiful. In fact, he was encircled by every charm that can make home happy, or earth a heaven. He was a man of strong mind, with the exception of *ONE IDEA*, which by slow degrees possessed his soul. Excited by a dark, a sombre view of God and his Providence, he imagined that he was called like Abraham of old, to slay the idols of his heart. Twice had he attempted the lives of his wife and child, when I was called in. They—his relatives—were about to confine him in a madman's cell. I conversed with him, found him perfectly rational on every point, but this *ONE IDEA*. 'I hear the voice of God calling upon me day and night to sacrifice my wife and child!' he said, in a calm tone, as though deeply impressed with a sense of his duty. Instead of opposing his views, I became his convert. 'God,' said I, 'has given this lovely wife, this beautiful child; he has a right to demand them again!' I led him at midnight to the chamber of his wife. All was silent as death, as we stood by her couch; I drew aside the curtains. By that dim light I showed him the uncovered bosom of his wife, the smiling face of his child. They were asleep, the baby girdled in its Mother's arms. 'Now,' I whispered, placing a knife in his hand, 'God calls upon you to do your duty. Strike, and strike to the heart!' He seized the knife, for a moment his face radiant with a mad enthusiasm, was lifted toward heaven, a muttered prayer escaped his lips, the knife descended, winged with all the vigor of his arm. Twice it descended, twice his hand and arm was bathed in blood ——"

Wolfe started from his seat with a cry of horror.

"Surely you jest, you did not counsel this horrid deed?" he exclaimed, grasping the Doctor by the hands.

"He stood there, in that silent chamber, gazing upon the mangled bodies of his wife and child, while their blood crimsoned his arm to the elbow. As he stood there, gazing upon the dead, I whispered in his ear, 'Rejoice, you have done your duty, God is pleased with you, Rejoice!' He turned to me—never did I behold a face like his, no longer radiant with his delusion, but stamped with unutterable woe. 'Wretch!' he shrieked, 'You have counselled this horrid deed!' He struck me to the floor; his knife was at

my throat. The agony of that moment, I shall never forget, for it turned my hair, which was black as a raven's wing, as white as snow, in the compass of an instant!"

The Doctor passed his hand over his forehead, as if to subdue the memory of that fearful scene.

"His knife was at my throat; his face stamped with the despair of a soul banished forever from its God, glowered above me. I had presence of mind, even in that dread moment, to murmur, 'Ere you kill me, look at your wife and child again!' He sprang to the bed, he beheld the *images of wax*, which by my orders, had been made to resemble his wife and child, and placed in his marriage bed. His delirium had vanished; he sank at my feet, uttering my name with sobs of joy. From that moment he was a sound man again; the Monomania had forsaken him forever."

Wolfe breathed more freely.

"It was well done!" he said, gazing in silent admiration upon the Doctor's face.

"Now for the case of the *Imbecile*," exclaimed the Doctor, laying the forefinger of one hand in the palm of the other.

"MY DAUGHTER!" muttered Wolfe, as the dark vein began to swell upon his forehead. His whole face wore a peculiar expression as he spoke this sentence; his brows were drawn down, until they nearly concealed his eyes, now flashing with deep light; his lips were convulsed with a sardonic smile.

"You state that she is beautiful," resumed the Doctor, "In fact, that her dark eyes gleam as with the calm light of reason. That her brow, instead of receding with the outlines of idiocy, is well-developed and prominent. That her form, instead of displaying any deformity of shape, is moulded in all the beauty and bloom of mature womanhood. Is it so?"

Wolfe had drooped his head upon his chest, in order to conceal the writhings of an emotion, which quivered over his face and shook his muscular frame. Folding his hands across his brow, he answered, in a hurried tone,

"It is, it is!"

"And yet she is an *imbecile*; a beautiful casket from which the jewel has departed forever. Her mind is in a state of torpor; she has no idea of the existence of a God. She is not conscious of a Soul. It is with extreme difficulty that you have been able to teach her to read and write. Do I speak the truth?"

"You do!" responded Wolfe, in a hollow tone.

"For twenty years, this has been the routine of her life. Confined to a range of apartments in this house, she has been attended by a single servant—a deaf and dumb woman, who waits upon her like a slave, attends to her slightest want, brings food to her chamber, assists her to dress in the morning, undress at night; in one word, supplies the place of father, mother, *society* to her. Once a month, this girl rides with you in your carriage; once

a day she takes the air in the garden attached to your mansion. Am I correct?"

Wolfe made a sign of assent, by nodding his head, but did not say a word.

"She has never known a Mother's care—"

Wolfe raised his face; it was pale as a shroud, while the eyes, glaring from beneath the woven brows, the black vein swelling from the brow, gave it an expression at once startling and frightful.

"Never!" he echoed, pressing his upper lip between his teeth.

"In fact, to a sudden and terrible fright, which shook her Mother's soul, on the night this child was born, you trace the origin of this melancholy *imbecility*?"

"Curses upon her," groaned Wolfe, in a tone which was scarce audible, "Not only to make a hell of her own life, but to force me to hate this child!"

The last words died away in an unmeaning murmur, yet still the tone in which the first were spoken, the agony which convulsed the face of the Bank President, excited the attention of the Doctor. He looked up with surprise, but in a moment this thought passed over his mind:

"Sorrow for the melancholy condition of his child, almost moves him to madness. Well—I will restore her to him again, with an unclouded reason. I see my way clear before me; it can be done."

"Doctor, what course of treatment do you intend to pursue?" exclaimed Wolfe, raising his head, as by a strong and sudden effort, he banished all signs of emotion from his face.

"Here is a case in which the mind is not destroyed, but still exists, although in a state of torpor. Therefore, it will be my effort to rouse this slumbering intellect by violent means. I will expose the patient to the most terrible fright, that my imagination can devise. The reaction will arouse her intellect from its death-like torpor. With this purpose directly in view, I have prepared the western wing of Wolf-Eden for her reception——"

A smile strange and peculiar passed over Wolfe's countenance:

"So you intend to startle her with some horrible surprise?" he said, in a whisper.

"Not only a horrible surprise, but a rapid succession of sights and sounds of terror. By day, unearthly voices, speaking as if from the air, shall excite her wonder; by night, terrible phantoms clad in all the drapery of the grave, and lighted by a lurid glare, flashing from the eyes of skulls, shall pass in review beside her bed, and startle her soul from its torpor, into quivering awe!"

"Excellent, excellent!" cried Wolfe, "Doctor your ideas are magnificent!"

"You must see, that treatment like this would madden a person in a sound mind, or kill a raving maniac with fright, while it would rouse a torpid intellect into life?"

"Yes, I see it all. The plan is beautiful!" exclaimed Wolfe, rising from

his seat, "In half an hour doctor, the carriage will be at the door, to convey yourself and patient, to Wolfe-Eden. But—a word in your ear doctor—I do not wish the eyes of my servants to spy into these matters. It is part of my plan to keep the retreat of this poor child, secret from all but myself and you. Therefore, as an especial favor, I must request you to take the coachman's place on the box, and drive your charge to Wolfe-Eden —"

"If it is necessary I will do it," calmly responded the Doctor, with the air of a man who will make any sacrifice for the cause of science.

For a moment Wolfe stood there, with his eyes fixed upon the Doctor's face, while an expression of doubtful meaning passed over his countenance. This expression cannot be defined in words, for now it wore the appearance of remorse, now it seemed like the outward indication of a settled and desperate resolve, and again, strange to say, it melted into a look of overwhelming compassion.

"Yes, this treatment will decide her fate," he slowly said, as his cold glassy eyes emitted gleams of fire; "The time has come at last!"

With these words he passed from the apartment. As the door closed upon him, a form veiled in a long dark gown, started from the shadows of the fire-place and confronted the Doctor.

It was the same form which we have seen stealthily enter the mansion, start up behind Wolfe and the Doctor, while engaged in earnest conversation, and then shroud itself in the shadows of the spacious hearth.

Meanwhile Wolfe hastened toward the chamber of the helpless Imbecile, whom he was soon to consign to the care of the Mad Doctor.

Ascending the thickly carpeted stairway, he presently stood beneath the lamp which gave light to the hall on the second floor of the mansion. This hall with the stairway of the third floor rising from one end, divided the second story into two ranges of apartments. Those on the right were entered by three lofty doors of dark oak, while on the left, a single door of the same wood, was fashioned into the wall.

This solitary door was gazed upon by the liveried servants of the Bank President, with mingled emotions of curiosity and fear. The emotions were caused by circumstances eminently adapted to raise the heart with wonder, or chill it with an indefinable dread. The threshold of that door was sacred from all footsteps, save those of Calvin Wolfe, the maiden in black, and the deaf mute who waited on her. No other form in the course of long years had been seen to cross that barrier.

It was from this door, that the maiden with her attendant emerged, when she was on her way to the leaf enshrouded walks of the garden; it was here that the Bank President received her, when he was about to lead her to his carriage.

Strange sounds had been heard in this part of the mansion, sounds which came to the ear with a deadened echo, as though they proceeded from some

distant habitation. At all hours these sounds had been heard throughout the mansion; not only at broad noon, when it echoed with the hum of life and action, but at night, when everything was wrapped in silence and sleep.

In short every detail of mystery and awe, was combined to invest that solitary door with an almost supernatural terror. Not a servant passed it by day or night without a quickened footstep, a glance cast backward over the shoulder, a shudder pervading the whole frame.

The Bank President stood before its oaken panels, his back turned to the light, while his face was sunken on his breast:

"She has no soul," he exclaimed in a deep voice, "It would be no sin to put an end to her miserable being, yet I cannot do it by one sudden blow. Twice I have resolved, twice I have entered her chamber with the purpose in my heart, but then a tone of the voice, a gleam of the eye, nay, a sudden expression passing over that face, have driven me weak and trembling from her presence. But now I am resolved; I will endure this agony no more! Away from this mansion she may suffer, she may die—what do I care? I shall not behold her agonies, and then the torture which I have carried at my heart for twenty years, will depart forever. 'Fright'—'sudden surprise'—'terrible re-action'—ha, ha, a brave Doctor this!"

With a small key of secret and peculiar construction, he opened the door, and in a moment stood in an apartment whose length traversed the entire depth of the mansion, while it was but three feet wide. At one end, near a small table on which a faint light was burning, sat a female figure, with folded arms and downcast eyes. Wolfe stood for a moment, and gazed in silence upon that form, clad from head to foot in a flowing gown of black cloth, with the head thrown into strong relief by the glare of the lamp. A low forehead, over which the snow-white hair was plainly laid aside, a short flat nose, separated from the wide mouth by a long space between the nostrils and the upper lip, a retreating chin from whose tawny skin scattered masses of beard struggled into view—such was the face which arrested the gaze of the Bank President.

The hands appearing from the wide folds of the sleeves which hung by her side, their large and scrawny outlines contrasting with the dark hue of the gown, were folded across her narrow chest.

Wolfe advanced, his footsteps resounding with a loud echo along the uncarpeted floor. The woman did not raise her head, or manifest the slightest sign of surprise or attention. From the hour of her birth no sound ever passed those thin lips, or penetrated those sealed ears; but now weary with watching, she had sunken into a sound slumber.

Wolfe cast an anxious and searching glance around the long and narrow apartment. It must be confessed that this singular room, in all its details, was calculated to increase the impression of mystery and awe, which rested like a spell upon this part of the mansion. Those lofty walls were con-

sealed in masses of leather, which placed over each other in numerous layers, added some inches to their thickness.

It was evident at a glance, that the sound of the human voice, in its loudest and most piercing tones, could never pass these walls from the rooms beyond. This narrow room with its thickly covered walls, served as a barrier between the apartments occupied by the Idiot Girl, and the other part of the mansion.

This room was in brief, the chamber of the deaf mute, who waited there every hour of the twenty-four, ready to obey at any moment the slightest sign of the unfortunate maiden. In one corner a plain mattress was dimly disclosed by the faint light; this was the couch of the attendant. By her shoulder might be seen the indistinct outlines of a door, cut into the leather covering of the walls; this communicated with the apartments of the Idiot Girl, which three in number lay between this narrow room and the wall of the next house. In former times, this part of the mansion had been one spacious room, but the Bank President divided it by partitions into three chambers, with this narrow apartment intervening between their confines and the hall of the second floor.

Wolfe passed by the sleeping woman, applied his hand to the door, and with the lamp in his hand entered the apartments of his daughter.

It was a small room elegantly furnished, with a sofa mirror and old fashioned chairs, while the floor was covered with a rich carpet, dark in hue and ancient in style. This was the sitting room of his daughter.

"She is doubtless in bed; I will awake her gently," said the Bank President, opening a small door leading into the bed-chamber; "Ah—all is silent—she is asleep—Hah! What does this mean?"

There was the apartment, with the white counterpane of its small couch, relieved by the dark wainscot, but no sign of the Idiot Girl was perceptible. The bed had not been pressed by her form; all was silent in her bed-chamber.

"She is in the Bath Room," muttered Wolfe, advancing toward a door, opposite the one by which he had entered this chamber; "But I heard no sound; all is still as the grave!"

He stood beside that door, listening intently for the faintest sound.

At last he uttered her name in a whisper: "Eleanor! My child—your father waits for you!"

Not a word, not a sound disturbed the breathless silence of the chamber.

"This is most strange! Eleanor! Still no reply—can she have fallen asleep in the bath? This is no time for ceremony; I will enter."

In a moment the light which he held, flashed over the details of the Bath Room. The bath was there rising from the centre of the floor, in the form of an immense sea-shell, the mirror extending between the windows, which looking upon the street, were fast closed and grated within, reflected the

form of the Bank President ; all was the same as it had been for twenty years, but still no sign of the Idiot Girl, met the eyes of her father.

With a rapid step he traversed the bath room, the bed-chamber and the sitting room, looking into each nook and corner, behind each door and within each closet, for the form of the unfortunate maiden, but still his search was unsuccessful.

The Bank President sank on the sofa, while his face assumed an expression of blank astonishment.

"There is some strange mystery in all this ! Has she escaped ? How ? Are not the windows closed and grated, like the casements of a gaol ? Is she not watched by this faithful attendant, who would rather lose her life, than witness the escape of the Idiot ? Yet what does it mean ? She is not here, she is gone, she is—perhaps—dead !"

Springing from the sofa, he examined the bars which were placed across the garden windows.

"All safe here ! Ah—that hope was vain ! She could not have crawled between these bars, even if it was her desire to dash herself from the window."

He passed through the door into the ante-chamber, where the deaf mute was sleeping. He shook her roughly by the shoulder ; in a moment she unclosed her large grey eyes, and looked up into his face with a vacant stare.

Wolfe made a rapid motion with his hand, which in the language of signs between the servant and master, signified :

"My daughter ; where is she ?"

The woman sprang to her feet, and regarded Wolfe with a look of deep respect, almost awe.

Again he repeated that hurried sign.

Her senses, confused by her slumber, became clear in a moment, as she gazed upon the agitated face of Wolfe. She started toward the door, and entered the sitting room of the Idiot Girl, turning her head over her shoulder, as she beckoned Wolfe to follow her. An indistinct gurgling murmur came from her throat, as she paused near the threshold, and pointed with her long and skinny finger toward the centre of the room.

Wolfe advanced, holding the light above his head, while his eyes dilated with wonder. A cry of surprise burst from his lips ; he started backward, thrilled to the heart with an emotion which deepened into awe.

There, in the centre of the apartment, stood a woman's form, clad in a dress of flowing white, over whose light folds long masses of dark hair, fell with a waving motion, even below the waist. Gathering her hands to her bosom, as if suddenly surprised by the intrusion of Wolfe, she stood there, motionless as marble, while her eyes were fixed upon his face, with a wild and startled expression.

You may be a painter, with shapes of beauty hovering round your pencil, like rays about a star, but you could never have painted that face. You may

be a poet, with the Ideal of loveliness stamped upon your soul, in coinage of eternal beauty, but you never beheld a face like that, even in your dreams.

All that is beautiful in dark hair, floating aside from a calm brow, down over white shoulders, in thick luxuriant masses, all that is lovely in the soft outlines of a cheek warming with the glow of ripening maidenhood, all that is voluptuous in a mouth, whose red lips pouting with youth and passion, seem to woo your kiss, all that is magnificent in regularity of feature, all that is tender, and thrilling and bewitching in the gleam of dark eyes, whose fire is veiled by long and trembling lashes, these all, were centred in the face, now invested with a deeper charm by the faint light which illumined the room.

This was the face of the IDIOT GIRL.

The robe which she wore neither gathered to her waist by a cincture, nor tortured into fashion by art, descended from her shoulders to her feet, in flowing folds, white as mountain snow. These folds, while they did not enclose her figure with a tight pressure, floated around her like wreaths of mist around a form of marble, their careless outlines giving a more voluptuous charm to the womanly fulness of her shape.

Who shall describe the arms, whose full outlines were perceptible through the flowing sleeves, or the bosom, which warm and swelling rose into light, beneath the gently clasped hands, or the proportions of that figure below the waist, widening at first into all the bloom of ripe womanhood, and then tapering down into the small feet, or of the dark hair, which reaching half way down her form, lay over her white dress like a mantle of ebony?

This was the form of the IDIOT GIRL.

At first she gazed on Calvin Wolfe with a startled glance, but in a moment her head drooped slowly down, while her dark hair veiled her bosom with its glossy tresses. A tremor shook her frame; she seemed afraid to gaze for more than an instant, upon the commanding visage of the Bank President.

But in a moment, gently raising her head, she parted the hair aside from her face with her small white fingers, and her dark eyes gleaming from the intervals of her tresses, encountered his gaze.

Calvin started; that glance, so sad, so tender, so beseeching, sank into his soul.

"Ah!" he grated the words between his fixed teeth, "Your mother cursed me, and I am accursed!"

His glassy eyes fired with an expression so mournful, so full of utter despair, that even the Idiot Girl, who never beheld him approach without a shudder, was moved.

She advanced a step toward him, slowly spread forth her arms, as if to rush to his embrace, but on the very instant a scowl darkened over his face, his eyes emitted a threatening glance, while that dark vein began to swell from the centre of his forehead.

Placing the light in the hands of the deaf mute, he folded his arms and gazed long and silently into daughter's face.

His thoughts were dark, confused and bitter:

"Where has she been? Is she indeed guarded by a supernatural hand? I try to kill her, and her glance disarms me; I search her apartment, and she is gone, I know not whither. I turn my back, and she is here again, sprung, to all appearance, from the walls around, or the floor beneath. Not one feature of mine is written upon her face, not one, not one—Ah—that mother's curse!"

Where had the Idiot Girl concealed herself? Why, at first eluding her father's search, did she suddenly dart into view, like a vision from the grave, or a form from the intangible air?

Leaving the Bank President to gaze with a darkening brow, in the face of the Idiot Girl, let us retrace our steps, and behold a scene which took place in this chamber an hour ago.

Let us follow this scene through all its varied details. We shall behold much to excite our curiosity, much to strike us with wonder, much, perchance, to thrill us with awe.

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

THE IDIOT GIRL.

One hour before the Idiot Girl stood in the centre of this room, her hands folded over her breast while her dark hair gathered neatly aside from her brow, relieved that blooming countenance, stamped with the traces of an inexpressible emotion.

A light which stood upon the table, near the sofa, threw its mild beams over her face and form.

She stood in an attitude of fixed attention, listening for the faintest sound. Suddenly a mild glow spread over her face, her half-closed lids softened the glance of her dark eyes, into a gaze of voluptuous languor, her lips so ripe, so red, so warm with youth and health, parted gently, disclosing teeth like ivory. You will observe that the hue of her young countenance, neither fair as the dawn, nor ruddy as the full blown rose, approached that light brown tint, relieved by a peach-like bloom on the cheeks and lips, which indicates a warm-blooded and passionate organization.

For a moment she stood in this attitude of attention, and then advancing toward the door, beyond whose panels her mute attendant waited, she inclined her head gently to one side, as if listening for the sound of a voice or a footstep.

All was still.

The Idiot Girl then passed quickly along the floor, and flung open the oaken door of a large closet, which was sunken into the wall of the apartment, against the wall of the adjoining house. There was nothing peculiar about this closet; the door and sides were of massive oak; the panel against the wall was fashioned of one solid piece of time-darkened wood.

With the light in her hand, Eleanor stood on the threshold of the closet, her finger pressed against her lip, while with her head sunk on her bosom, she seemed engaged in the act of listening.

Poor Idiot Girl! No doubt she fancied that the footstep of some good angel would strike her ear, or the voice of some blessed spirit thrill her heart, yet still all was silent as midnight.

At last entering the closet, she rested her head against the large oaken panel, while her face, disclosed by the light which she held in her hand, crimsoned along the cheeks and over the brow with a strange emotion.

Nay, her bosom began to heave under the folds of her light dress, her eye dilating beneath the fringed lid, began to glare on vacancy with a long and absorbing glance.

This was a strange Idiot Girl! No mind, no consciousness of a soul, no knowledge of God, a poor, helpless Imbecile, and yet to own a form which might have shamed the loveliest woman that ever trod the earth, with its warm and passionate beauty, and yet to own a face which shone in every lineament, with the light of intellect, the fire of love!

Who gazing on those large dark eyes, would believe that her Intellect was slumbering in idiocy?

Who glancing over the outlines of her form, would say that this shape, glowing with youth, blooming with the outlines of mature womanhood, belonged to an—Idiot?

She listened intently for a few moments, and then with an expression of disappointment shadowing her face, she came from the closet, placed the light upon the table, and flung herself on the sofa, her eye still fixed upon that oaken panel.

Poor Eleanor! Pity her if you please, smile at her delusion if you will, still there was something very beautiful in the gleam of her dark eyes, something very lovely in the glow of her Idiot face, as she sat there, watching as if for an angel's tread, listening as if for a blessed spirit's voice.

Still all was silent as the grave.

At last there came a sound, echoing as if from a distance, a low, deep, prolonged sound of agony, like the cry of a strong man, wailing for the death of his dearest hope, heaving from his very soul one sullen groan of despair.

Eleanor started to her feet and clasped her hands, while her face grew white as her dress. All was silent again; that cry of agony had passed away. Still the dilating eyes of the Idiot Girl were fixed upon that oaken panel.

At last—was it fancy, was it a vain delusion of her poor weak brain?—there came another sound, like the echo of a footstep, yes, like the opening of a door.

Eleanor advanced a single step, and then stood—like an image of suspense—with parted lips and outstretched arms. Poor girl! While her flushed cheek grew like the bloom of a ripe peach, while her form quivering in every nerve, seemed like a lily shaken by the wind, she fancied that some spirit of her wandering dreams drew nigh.

That sound was heard again, and the oaken panel passed slowly aside—a blaze of light rushed into the room—and a form stood in the closet, holding a glaring lamp above its head.

Was it a spirit from the dead? Ah, no! That bronzed face, that massive brow, those earnest eyes, lighted with the fire of a strong intellect, bore the stamp of actual life, the traces of many a fierce combat with poverty and circumstance.

“Leon!” cried the Idiot Girl, bounding forward and laying her head upon his bosom, while her full round arms were wound about his neck.

The Student slowly advanced, bearing this lovely burden on his breast. He laid his lamp upon the table, and with the Idiot Girl still clinging to his neck, sank on the sofa.

“Eleanor!” he said in a low deep voice, tremulous with emotion, “Beyond that oaken panel lies poverty, neglect and death! But on this side, love, happiness, oblivion await me! Ah, how many times crushed by the world’s wrong, bruised in heart and brain by the scorn of the menial of fortune, the vulgar pride of the lacquey of wealth, have I come here to you Eleanor, to you, and found a heart to love me, a bosom to soothe my throbbing head, a voice to cheer me on my dark and wandering way!”

He spake with a deep emotion, with tears in his large dark eyes. Then raising her face from his bosom, he gazed long and earnestly upon those lineaments that kindled beneath his glance, while their lips gradually—as though by some magnetic impulse—grew nearer to one another, until they melted in a kiss.

“Leon! I have waited for you long; I have been thinking of the day when first we met? Do you remember it, Leon?”

“Shall I ever forget it? In my lonely garret beyond that oaken panel, I was toiling over my books, when—as if from the air—a voice—oh, how sad in its low-toned music—broke on my ear. That voice murmured the words that I had spoken the day before, in the silence of my room. At the sound I arose, listened—but it was gone!”

As he spoke her dark hair escaping from its cincture, fell waving over the arms which gathered her to his heart. It was a beautiful picture of youth, genius, innocence and passion. His dark eyes gleaming from beneath his massive brow, shone with a mild and moistened light, as her

warm breath mingled with his own, while her arms were gently wound about his neck.

That Idiot face was radiant with love and light.

"Yes, yes, Leon, I remember well the day when sitting by yonder closet-panel, I heard your voice repeating high thoughts, whose meaning the poor Idiot—could not know, but whose music sank into her soul. Poor Idiot that I was, I listened long and earnestly; your words were stamped upon my heart; I wandered along these rooms repeating them again and again, until I heard you move beyond the panel—then, shuddering as though I had committed some terrible fault, I was silent——"

As she spoke, with her soft hand she smoothed his dark hair aside from his brow.

"But I spoke again Eleanor, and you listened! I heard your voice again; I drew near to the panel; I spoke to you!"

"Ah, how my heart thrilled as I heard your voice! I know not what I said in reply, for I was a poor Idiot then—but I do know that my heart throbbed as though it would burst from my bosom, while my eyes swam in tears. They were tears of joy, Leon, for I was sad and lonely—oh, I shudder when I think of the dreary hours, when I was all alone in these silent rooms."

She laid her hands upon his breast, even upon that faded coat, which betokened the poverty of the student. Rich in the treasure of his love, what knew she of poverty and want?

"But I remember your words, Eleanor! Yes, reared as you had been, a prisoner in these rooms, never speaking to a human thing, save him whom you name—Father—your intellect buried in utter neglect, you had yet a heart, and that heart gave words to your tongue! Do you not remember those words, Eleanor?"

"I remember your words, but mine I forget. '*Speak again lady,*' you said, '*for I could listen here forever!*' Then my heart burned, my blood was fire, some words arose to my tongue, but I never knew what they were——"

"*'Oh, I am sad and lonely!'* these were your words, Eleanor, uttered with a sigh that came through the oaken panel to my heart. Never shall I forget the deep joy of that moment, for then I knew that I was not altogether alone in my misery, yes, Eleanor, a wild hope flashed over my soul, that you would love me——"

He bent softly down; their lips melted together in one of those kisses which fire the blood, but make no sound.

"But you had never seen me Leon. For all you knew, I might have been old, withered, hideous to look upon!"

O, that I could paint to you the rapture of that student's look! Proudly he gazed upon her face; with one quick glance he surveyed the outlines of that form, so blooming in the bosom, which heaved beneath the folds of the

white robe, so voluptuous in its womanly fullness, as it was carelessly flung along the sofa, and then his gaze was centred on her eyes again. How the poor Idiot's soul looked forth upon him, from those dazzling windows.

"You old, withered, hideous? Ah, when your voice first came through the oaken panel, I knew that you were young and loving and beautiful! Yes, my fancy pictured a young face, with flowing dark hair, and large deep eyes—but the picture soon faded when I gazed on you. The fancy was beautiful, but the reality was divine!"

"Yet it was long before we saw each other! Do you remember it—the day when I looked from the carriage window, for my glove?"

Her voice sank to a low whisper, which came like music from heaven, to the lover's soul.

"I beheld your face Eleanor, at once I knew you! In a moment my books were dashed on the earth, I rushed forward, and was lost in silent admiration, love, wonder! until—ah! *I will give him back his dollar some day!*"

An expression dark as it was ominous, came over his brow, when he spoke these emphatic words.

For a moment Eleanor gazed upon his face with a look of fear, while a shudder quivered through her frame. Then without a word, she drove the anger from his eyes, the madness from his brow, for she laid her cheek, warm with love and health against his own, while the tresses of her dark hair fell softly over his face. Then, in those tones of deep music she spoke again, while he wound his fingers in her raven hair.

"Then Leon, we sat day by day, one on each side of the panel, you reading the work of some great intellect, while I treasured the burning words in my heart. Then my heart began to grow, my intellect to live! Then—oh, how beautiful the Revelation!—then for the first time, I learned that there was a God; that he had given me a soul, immortal as the stars! From your lips, through the closed panel Leon, did I learn these truths, which my father—think of it Leon—*my father* had never told his child! Ah—why does he hate me thus, why coop me in this prison, why deny me the treasure of a father's love?"

"But look you Eleanor, how Almighty God tramples upon the plans of these petty things of clay! Here we have your father—for some yet unexplained cause, some dark purpose—yet unrevealed, making his own child a prisoner, from the moment of her birth. Never does she converse with a human being, never do the kind faces of friends look in through the closed doors of her solitary home. She grows to womanhood almost an Idiot, unconscious of a soul, ignorant of the existence of a God! As for a mother's love, she knows it not even by name! *Yet an oaken panel, separating one room from another, frustrates the plans of this tyrant, makes a mock of all his cruelty, and tramples his schemes into dust!*"

Leon raised his head proudly on his shoulders, while his clenched hand

fell by his side ; there was a deep scorn on his compressed lips, and in his large dark eyes.

"Ah, Leon, it is a dark, a dreary history ! That night when awaking from my sleep, I beheld him bending over the couch, a knife gleaming in his hand—ah ! It is a terrible memory for the heart to treasure of a—father !"

"A FATHER !" echoed Leon in a deep indignant tone, "Do not blaspheme that sacred name, by linking it with his !"

"And yet Leon, had he not been cruel, we would never have known each other !"

She spoke in that low whispering tone, which rippling from the lips of a beautiful woman, takes the heart by storm.

"The day when first we met"—she exclaimed in the same low whisper, recalling that blessed memory once again, "Do you remember it Leon ?"

"Do I remember it Eleanor ?—I saw you from the carriage window, I resolved to behold you once again. For days my thoughts by night and day, were centred on that hope. For long days and weary nights my hope was vain, but at last I discovered the secret spring in the panel—my rude home and your father's proud mansion, were one in the olden time, you remember, Eleanor ? The spring yielded, the panel moved, I beheld you—the object of all my hopes and dreams—standing before me, with your hands folded on your bosom, while your long dark hair floated down to your waist ! I was entranced by the sight ; I could not move, but stood like a statue, gazing silently in your deep dark eyes !"

"I heard the panel move—my heart fluttered in my breast—a thousand wild fancies flashed over my soul. At last, at last, a voice whispered, I shall behold him ! Presently it passed aside, that oaken panel, and by the light of the lamp, which you held in your hand, I beheld you Leon, I felt myself drawn to you, as if by invisible hands ——"

"You swam gently to my arms ! Bending over my Eleanor in that lone hour, I pressed on her lips my first kiss of love !"

"We have met, we have loved !" he exclaimed, in a voice that quivered with deep emotion, "Never has the eye of an angel looked upon a passion purer than ours ! Speak Eleanor, have I not been brother, friend, lover to you ? When gathering your form to my breast, has one base desire shone from these eyes—speak, Eleanor, and answer me ! When pressing my kiss upon your lips, has one earthly pulsation mingled in that pressure ?"

She arose gently from his arms. She stood by his side, with all the loveliness of her shape revealed by her loosely flowing robe. She looked into his eyes, while her soft hands were laid against his brow. Then bending down, until her lashes nearly touched his cheek, she answered him in a tone, with a look whose rapture shames the poverty of words to tell.

"Leon you know that I have been reared apart from the world. You know that I am but a child in the knowledge of its ways. What I do

know you have taught me. I scarce can tell the meaning of the words father, lover, brother, friend. But Leon, let me kneel here by your side. Let me lay my hands upon your brow; my bosom next to yours. Here I am Leon; do with me what you will! Will my life serve you, would my death make you happy? Speak Leon, and I die! All that I possess, this form which is now gathered in your arms, this bosom which now throbs against your own, this hair which now floats over your hands, nay, these lips which now meet and mingle with yours—these, nay, all that I possess all that I am, all that I can be, belong to you!”

No words can depict the sublime simplicity of her look and tone. All the confidence that the child feels in the mother, all the rapture that warms the devotee kneeling to a beloved saint, all the stainless purity of a first and virgin passion, shone in one glow from the countenance of the—Idiot Girl!

Leon's heart was too full for words.

His head drooped slowly down upon her bosom, even as she knelt by his side; his frame shook with convulsive throes; he wept like a child. She felt his tears fall on her neck, and trickle slowly down her bosom.

“You know but little of the world Eleanor,” he gasped between those sobs which shook his frame, “But did you know by heart the dark history of my life, could you look back through the long vista of twenty-two years, and see me blasted from my birth with the brand of scorn, withered by neglect, crushed by poverty, then would you feel in some measure the deep joy which overflows my heart in this hour! At last I have found one heart to love, to know, to trust in me!”

There is something terrible in that joy of a proud and bruised heart, which at last, after years of loneliness and neglect, finds another heart, whose pulsations mingle with its own. There is something terrible in the tears of manhood at any time, but when those tears are wrung from the heart, by the throes of a deep and absorbing passion, each drop that starts from the lid or scalds the cheek, is but the outward sign of a hallowed thought, which rises serenely over the troubled soul.

“Now,—was it the will of the great God, who watches over the orphan, and sets all things right at last,—I could fold my arm about your form, Eleanor, and pray that Death might strike us both, even as we knelt for the blessed blow! For life with all stores of bliss and woe, can never bring to us a moment, so holy in the sight of God, as this!”

Raising his face from her bosom, he spoke these words, in a calm and deliberate tone, with his eyes raised to Heaven, as though he conversed with his God.

“Come, Eleanor,” he said, “I have a sad sight to show you.”

Then silently he led her through the unclosed panel, into his solitary garret, where the poor furniture of the place—a table covered with books and papers, an old arm chair, rude couch with a cloak for a coverlid, and a

heavy volume for a pillow—could not hide the uncarpeted floor, or the bare and blackened walls.

"Come, Eleanor," he again exclaimed, and led her down a narrow stairway, with the steps creaking beneath their tread, into a large dreary room, whose uncovered walls and floor were only relieved by a dark object in the centre.

Holding the light in his hand, he advanced along the floor; he paused in the centre of the room.

Eleanor grew pale and shuddered; she had never gazed upon the face of Death before.

That dark object was a coffin; beside it, stretched on a rude pallet, which was spread on the floor, lay the cramped and distorted body of a dead man. While Eleanor shuddered at the sight, Leon bending down, held the light over the face of the corse.

It was an old man, whose shrunken limbs were yet clad in their faded garments, antique in shape and style. One bent arm supported his head, while the fingers of the hand were clenched as in the last contest with death. His face—ah, it was fearful to behold—with its grey beard hanging round the lank and hollow cheeks, its shrivelled lips parting in a grotesque smile, its stony eyes, which started from the lids, and shone in the light with a cold unearthly glare.

"He was mine only friend!" burst from Leon's lips, as he knelt beside the corse, "For twenty-two years, when I was sick he watched over me, when I bent over my books, seeking from their dim pages, the great secrets—Fame and Wealth—he labored for my bread, with his cramped fingers; when I was crushed by the world's neglect, bruised to the heart's core by the blight of poverty, he, my noble Jean would steal to my side, and tell me in his broken accents, that better days would come! And now, Eleanor, now he is dead!"

He bowed his head upon his breast and veiled his face in his hands. Without knowing why, Eleanor felt the tears stealing down her cheeks. As if unconscious of the action, she knelt with the Student, beside the body of the dead man, her face softened by a deep sadness, that gave a holy beauty to her large dark eyes.

It was a touching group, centred by the light of a trembling lamp, in that lonely and desolate room—The body of the old man, with the shrivelled lips and glaring eyes, Léon, his face buried in his hands, Eleanor winding one arm about his neck, while her long dark hair streamed in flowing tresses over her shoulders.

Her face, gently turned towards him, was softened by the same light, that shone over the distorted face of the dead.

"Who was he, Leon?" she whispered, gathering her lover close to her side.

"I know not Eleanor; the world called him a poor Old Frenchman.

strange in his habits, ridiculous in his broken accent. The bank, which by its failure two years since, robbed him of the small sum whose interest had supported us for twenty years—in want, in misery, you may be sure, yet still preserved us from actual starvation—called him a weak-minded old dotard, when he ventured to tell the President, that one of his silver vases, melted into dollars, would amply pay the old Frenchman's claim.

"As for myself, I can only say, that he was all the world to me, the only one I cared for, in all the streets of this cold, heartless town—"

"You forget your Eleanor, your poor Idiot Girl ——" she said, in a whisper, while her face was darkened by an expression of sorrow.

"You are not of the world, Eleanor!" exclaimed Leon, in a voice of deep emotion, as he turned his gaze to her beautiful countenance. Her eyes fired with rapture, while she placed one hand on each temple and laid her lips to his.

"Yet it was strange that I never saw him," she exclaimed after a moment's silence.

"Many a time, Eleanor, after I have left your room, and thrown myself upon my solitary couch, have I heard a step creaking on the stairs, and then a form stood by my side, a kiss was pressed upon my forehead, while a well-known voice murmured to me, in its broken accents, 'Love on my boy! Better days will come! One day, my child, when you are twenty-two, you will come to your bride with a fortune, yes, wealth my boy, by countless thousands, to make her happy!' To night I am twenty-two and he is dead!"

"Yet what need have we of wealth? Can we not be happy together without it?"

A scorn that was almost Satanic, flashed from his large dark eyes.

"Happy without wealth? Where? In this great city, where hearts are sold for gold, where money will sanctify any crime, or the want of it provoke any insult? Where to be rich is to be virtuous, to be poor, is to be dishonest and depraved? Where Justice is so holy and refined, that she only draws her sword at the magic word—DOLLAR! Where you can buy beauty, intellect, righteousness, even as you would buy a pedlar's ribbons, for so much per yard? Where souls cannot be saved, unless they come to the altar of Almighty God, burdened with gold, and shrouded in silks and broadcloth?"

Eleanor turned his gaze aside from his agitated face; yet still his voice, deep and hollow, quivered through the lonely room.

"Look my Eleanor, to-night a rich man told me, that unless I paid him ten dollars by to-morrow's light, he would pitch the dead body of this old man into the street? To-night a rich man, a very charlatan who had amassed thousands by his shameless murders, purchased from me, with twenty dollars, the manuscript of a medical work, which has cost me three years hard labor, in hunger, neglect and cold! I wanted a coffin for my friend, Eleanor, a coffin for this old man, and I sacrificed the toil of three

years, for twenty dollars! Ah—thank God, that you scarcely know the meaning of that terrible word—THE DOLLAR—which sways the destiny of millions, like the fiat of a God!”

As he spoke, his attention was arrested by a white object, which the dead man grasped in his cramped fingers. In a moment he forced it from that cold embrace, and held it in the light. It was a strip of parchment, inscribed with strange mysterious words, written in a bold and legible hand.

“Thank God, Eleanor, the dying man has left a hope for me, clutched in the grasp of his stiffened fingers,” he exclaimed, while his olive cheek glowed with crimson, and his dark eyes dilating, shone with dazzling light. “Wolf-Eden? I have heard the old man speak of that place. Would that I had been here when he died! But this night will I search for the Revelation of my fate, this night, Eleanor, will I learn the mystery of my life!”

“Leon,” said the Idiot Girl, “You are unhappy. Ah, could the sacrifice of my life make you happy, how willingly would I lay it at your feet!”

Simple words were these, spoken from the fulness of a heart yet virgin from the world, in a tone that melted the Student’s soul.

“Perhaps my search will give me wealth,” he cried, as he caught her to his heart in rapture, “Then—then—but tell me Eleanor, have you ever seen Wissahikon?”

“Wissahikon?” she echoed, fixing her dreamy eyes upon his face, “Do you mean that place of light and shadow, where the tall trees bend over dark rocks, where the blue sky far above the forest, is mirrored in the calm waters far below, where there is moss upon the sod and vines among the branches, music in the leaves, the waters, the very air—oh, do you mean that holy place, which seen by day, lingers all night in our dreams? Once a month, my father has taken me through its lonely dell, once a month, when there was ice upon the waters, and the rocks and trees stripped of vines and foliage, rose ruggedly into the sky, once a month, when everything was music and verdure, have I passed along this beautiful valley.”

“Eleanor, did you ever wind along a path, which leads from the waters up the steep rocks, among the forest trees, until it opens all at once, upon a prospect lovely as a dream? A quiet cottage standing under the shade of grand old oaks, its grey walls overgrown with roses, which twine about the windows, and hang in festoons over the door? A garden encircles it, Eleanor, and not far from the white fence which encloses the flowers, a clear spring bubbles up from sands of gold. It is a beautiful place, Eleanor, shut out from the world by trees, with here and there a view of distant hills, surmounted by white clouds, breaking on your eye through the intervals of foliage, while solitary walks, leading through glades of shadowy beauty, encircle it on every side——”

“O, beautiful!” she exclaimed, winding her arms around his neck, while her warm cheek was laid against his breast.

“In case my search rewards me with wealth, Eleanor, we will be mar-

ried to-morrow. We will depart from these walls, and dwell together in the cottage of the Wissahikon ——”

She raised her head from his bosom, and their dark eyes met.

“O, Leon, it is a picture of heaven you have drawn for me!” she whispered, as their hands were clasped together, while he felt her warm breath upon his cheek.

For a few brief moments there was silence. The light still flashed over the ghastly face of the dead, but the Student and the Idiot Girl kneeling there, in the centre of the desolate room, gazed long and earnestly in each others faces. What cared they for the presence of the dead, for the dark future, for the cold and heartless world?

Hand clasped in hand, bosom heaving with bosom, eye gleaming in eye, they were conscious of no other world than that created by passion, that Paradise, over which Youth and Hope hovered as guardian angels. O, the silent rapture of that moment of joy, when their souls mingled, even as the breath from their parted lips, and became one forever!

In a few moments they arose from their knees.

“Eleanor, farewell till to-morrow!”

“Till to-morrow, Leon!”

With these words they parted; she to return to her chamber, where the dark face of her father awaited her; he to hasten on his way to Wolf-Eden, where his fingers were to unclothe one by one, from the edge of the roof, even while the casket of his hopes was under his arm, and blackness gloomed beneath, ready to receive his mangled corse.

She turned to the stairway leading to the garret, the light in her hand; he to the stairway leading to the door, his form enveloped in gloom. The dead body lay between them.

She stood in the door of the stairway, looking upon his form as it disappeared in the gloom. One hand held the light above her head, while the other parted her black tresses aside from her face.

All around her the room was dark; the full light of the lamp shone over her face and form.

She heard his footsteps on the stairs—her lips parted. Then the opening of the street door; she started one step forward, while a sudden expression of gloom passed over her face. Was it a Presentiment? The door closed; its harsh echo came distinctly to her ears.

Still she stood there, with her long dark hair waving to and fro, over her white robe, while her cheek grew pale, and her eyes gleamed with soft and tender light.

She was very beautiful—that IDIOT GIRL.

CHAPTER EIGHTH.

YONAWAGA.

"PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES!" muttered the Great man, striding up and down the spacious apartment, while his arms were placed behind his back and his eyes fixed on the carpet; "PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES!"

He paused for a moment before one of the lofty windows and gently thrust the silken curtains aside. Before him, bathed in the light of the same moon that revealed his pale face, agitated in every lineament, arose that mass of snow-white marble, with its ponderous columns and long range of steps, the United States Bank. Built in that pure style of Grecian architecture, which always strikes the heart with its faultless proportions, its silent grandeur, its eternal image of beauty, hewn in marble, the massive structure was now overhung by a small cloud, which intervening between the roof and the moon, flung one dense mass of shadow down over its centre, turning a single column to the hue of ebony, and falling along the range of steps in one long belt of blackness.

On one side of the Bank, to the west, extended a long line of towering brick mansions, over whose roofs arose the clear outlines of the State House steeple; on the other side, to the east, fronting the line of the street, an edifice of white marble, relieved while it did not rival, the colossal bank, which formed the centre of the picture. It was an impressive picture, that mass of marble, with the deep blue sky above its roof, and the belt of shadow darkening down its centre.

"President of the United States!" again repeated the Great Man; as his pale face was agitated in every lineament; "*He* was President, and by his will, combined with the Powers of his office, he destroyed yonder bank. It is a fact worthy the solemn record of history; this one man Jackson, backed by the tremendous power of the Presidential chair, defied the whole Money Power of the nation, concentrated in yonder Bank, and incarnated in the person of Nicholas Biddle! It is a magnificent office; one, in fact, that a man might very justly peril his soul to win!"

Turning from the window, as he uttered these thoughts, he advanced toward the table of the spacious apartment, where burned a small lamp, amid a scattered mass of papers, flinging it faint light through the twilight gloom of the place.

It was one of the most elegant saloons of the United States Hotel, furnished in a style of mingled comfort and splendour, with the door of the bed-room, to which it was attached, visible in the dimness of the background.

MILLSTONE OF MILASTOGA laid one hand upon the table, while the other was placed behind his back. The light from beneath flashed over his face, giving a sinister glow to each feature. As his head was inclined to one shoulder, his lips were compressed, his blue eyes shone with unusual light, while his forehead was stamped with the traces of deep thought.

The same great topic which had occupied his thoughts for an hour of deep meditation, now spoke out in his whispered words.

"To be President of the United States—what is it? It is to hold a power, compared to which, the sceptre of a monarch is a bauble,—a power, which controls navies, bids armies march, locks up or scatters millions with a word,—a power which has its pensioned satellites in every city, town, hamlet of the Union, a paid minion in every post-master, a salaried lacquey in each Custom House officer,—A POWER, in fact, which towering above the empty pageant of an English Sovereign, or the trembling crown of a Louis Philippe, rivals in its sway, the Imperial diadem of Russia! Nay—I had rather be President of the United States, than Nicholas of Russia. For the one rules over millions of freemen—the other sways hordes of slaves. No hand but that of Almighty God, can tear the President from his chair, during his term of four years—while Nicholas can never say for one moment, '*I am safe from the dagger of the Assassin!*'"

His pale cheek glowing with a sudden flush, in the excitement of the moment, he pressed the palms of his hands nervously together.

"To dwell there, in the White House for four years, to be looked upon by the whole nation, as its HEAD and CHIEF, to stand before the Kings of the old world, as the great REPRESENTATIVE of the Destinies of the New, to receive their ministers with a severe simplicity, that indicates the strength of Power without its drapery, to crush the majority of the National Congress, with a simple word, VETO, to be surrounded by crowds of flatterers, who praise your good acts and worship your bad ones, to be welcomed into great cities with the smiles of beauty, the roar of cannon, the hurrahs of millions, to be a Conqueror without the toils of war—a King without the empty title—an Emperor without the purple——

"This, this it is, to be President of the United States!"

This man, at all other times calm and cold-blooded, without one warm throb for a friend, or an honorable pulsation of resentment against a foe, now trembled in every inch of his muscular frame. His pale cheek was flushed, his blue eyes glared, his lips were fixedly compressed, until the lower part of his face was distorted into wrinkles.

"Who would not scheme—plan—conspire—sell his friends and embrace his enemies—swear allegiance to principles which his inmost soul abhorred—tear from his heart everything it held dear or sacred—in order to become President of the United States?"

Folding his arms, the Great Man silently strode along the room. He had not measured ten paces from the table, when the door of the apartment

was opened without a sound, and two persons stood on the threshold, bowing and posturing before the Great Man.

"Good evening, Mr. Millstone," said a slender, wiry individual, whose contracted and wrinkled face was surmounted by stiff masses of iron-grey hair, "a fine evening—salubrious weather—well, I hope?"

"My dear Skinner, I am glad to see you!" said the Statesman, holding forth both hands: "I have been anxiously expecting you, my dear General. Do be seated!"

As Skinner dropped into a capacious arm-chair by the table, the second individual advanced.

"Mr. Millstone—good evening," said a voice, which heard in the dark, would at once be impressed with the idea, that it came from the lips of a very fat man.

"My dear Oyle—why Oyle—why Colonel! Ah—this is an unexpected pleasure!" said Millstone, laying his hand on the shoulder of the gentleman. He was a very fat man indeed, with a tremendous paunch, small eyes,—hidden away somewhere, in a wilderness of red cheeks—gold spectacles, and short, curly, tow-colored hair. As he passed along the room, his gait reminded you of the walk of a premium ox, which has been fattened for some agricultural fair, or—pardon the comparison for the sake of its truth—the waddle of a Muscovy duck after a grain of corn. If his voice was a fat voice, then his walk was a corpulent walk.

After a severe but unsuccessful attempt to bow, this evidence of the highly successful results of a long course of terrapin suppers, waddled to a chair.

"Well, gentlemen, I am glad to see you. We can now discuss the great topic at our leisure!"

As he spoke, Millstone seated himself in the arm-chair at the head of the table, and surveyed his friends with a long and searching glance. It must be confessed that these figures, would have furnished an idea for a painter, who was fond of violent contrasts.

At the head of the table, commanding in his bulk of chest and width of shoulders, serene in the expression of his blue eyes, beaming from beneath his bold forehead, sat Millstone, his head inclined to one side, his hands folded gently over his shirt bosom.

On the right, slender in form, contracted in face, restless and nervous, in the changing glance of his keen grey eyes, General Skinner sat, cutting a quill to pieces with his pen-knife, while his cast-iron countenance, seamed with innumerable wrinkles, was turned toward the light. There was but one expression on that face. Gaze upon the low forehead, surmounted by iron-grey hair, which rose in straight masses from the wrinkled skin, the thin lips, pinched tightly together, beneath the prominent nose, the small grey eyes, glancing from side to side, without keeping their glance upon the same object for a moment, and you formed your estimate of the great characteristic of that countenance, without a second thought. It was cunning, that

mysterious kind of instinct, which when cultivated to its extreme extent, bears a grotesque likeness to INTELLECT. ' This face, look at it as you might, displayed—no gleam of serene thought, or a single stray spark of majestic genius—but the very sublimity of Cunning.

On the left, a grotesque image of fatness, carried to the verge of Apoplexy, sat Colonel Oyle, his immense cheeks glowing in the light, and glistening in all their crimson, while his small eyes twinkled from their heavy lids, beneath his gold spectacles, with a vacant and sleeping glare.

" Well, gentlemen, let's to business," exclaimed General Skinner, cutting another quill to pieces, as he surveyed the face of the great man, with a searching glance. " The fact is my dear Millstone, the case stands precisely thus: You are to be President. Granted. How shall it be done?"

" I am willing," said Millstone, in his blandest voice, " To accept of this distinguished honor, in case the People insist upon it."

" Another Cincinnatus from the plough!" exclaimed Colonel Oyle, with a violent effort, " I'll make a note of it for my next paper."

" Now, my dear Oyle, allow me to remark, that this is all—fudge!" said Skinner, briskly, as he turned to the corpulent gentleman. " Cincinnatus from the plough! Does Millstone look as if he came from the plough? Cincinnatus from the green bag and criminal docket, rather, if you must be poetical."

" But, Flynte," said the fat man, bending forward, as he adjusted his spectacles, " We mean those little poetical touches for the *moral* public. You know we go for morality; yes we do. You need not laugh. We go for morality, religion, virtue, and all those things, quite strong."

" So we do!" said Flynte Skinner, cutting away at his quill; " But gentlemen, as it is our object to make one of our number President, listen to me, while I review the state of parties. In the first place Millstone, there are but two parties."

" Democratic and Federal?" said the great man, with a condescending smile.

" Yes. The Democratic is the party of the many: the Federal the select coterie of the Few. The one opposes banks, monopolies, privileged bodies in every form; the other upholds them to the last gasp. The one trusts blindly in the virtues of the People, and therefore is Republican to the core; the other scorns that People, and therefore favors any system which approaches Monarchy. Am I correct Millstone?"

It was astonishing to see with what condescending patronage of look and smile, the Statesman received the familiarity of Flynte Skinner.

" You are correct. You are more. You are philosophic!"

" Do not misunderstand me, Millstone. I do not mean to confound the Federal party of the present day, with the great organization of Alexander Hamilton. Nor do I intend to class the Democratic party of '44, with the Jefferson party of 1800. The fact is, the leaders of the old Federal party

the friends of Oligarchy and Monarchy, are about equally divided among the opposing parties of the present day. The same remark applies to the leaders of the old Jefferson party—"

"For instance," unhappily remarked Col. Sperme Oyle, "Us three was all old Federalists in '24. Henry Clay was then a Democrat. We are now Democrats; Clay is a Federalist. Don't you remember Mr. Millstone you once said, that if you thought your heart had a Democratic spec on it, you would take it out, and air it? Or something o' that sort?"

This remark unfortunate alike in its bad grammar and historical truth cast a shadow over the Statesman's face.

"Sir, your reminiscences are exceedingly ill-timed!" he said, turning his face from the corpulent individual, while his head inclined nearer to his left shoulder.

Sperme Oyle's face was red before; now it assumed an intensity of color, that no painter would dare transfer to his canvass; indeed his broad cheeks seemed to burn like ignited charcoal. He pulled an immense blue handkerchief from his pocket, and with his gouty fingers urged it to and fro, over those flaming cheeks.

"O, my!" he whispered with a deep sigh, "In these ticklish times, one hardly knows where to put things in their right place!"

"Indeed Millstone," said General Skinner, reprovingly; "You are too hard upon our friend Sperme. We were all Federalists once. You did say *that*! I said the same, or more, yes sir; 'if I thought there was a Democratic hair in my beard, I would pluck it out!' These were my words. We are Federalists yet!"

"Are we?" whispered the Statesman, glancing from side to side with an air of caution; "Remember 'the good of the People is our only aim,' General. You know our election banners?"

"*The party with which we are associated is Democratic to the heart, but the rulers of that party will always be old Federalists!*"

"Hah!" ejaculated the Statesman pulling the tie of his white cravat, with a nervous movement.

"The Whig party combines the dough of Federalism with the leaven of Democracy. In other words, its members, its voters, in the mass are Democratic, but it is ruled by a well-organized band of old Federalists, who in their turn tremble at the name of the great Democrat in the Whig ranks—Henry Clay!"

"Because Henry Clay is the only Democrat among them, he was swindled out of the nomination in '40, by the Federal portion of the Whig party with Daniel Webster at their head?"

Millstone uttered this sentence in a murmuring tone, as though it was intended for his own ear.

"In the same way we kept old Jackson down, as long as we could: we, the Federal leaders of the Democratic party. But the old man was too

strong for us. What we commenced against the banks, as a mere political cry, the old General took in serious earnest; he was a dreadful old man. Foolish ideas against banks—poor politician—*pity he had not filled the measure of his glory at New Orleans!*"

A sneer quivered about the thin lips of General Skinner, while Millstone slowly nodded his head, and Oyle sat wrapt in wonder.

"There may be truth in your observations, and there may not be truth," said the Statesman, in the tone of a very great man, who does not like to commit himself.

"Here is the point Millstone; here is the point Oyle. The Federalists in the Democratic party, will always rule. We are the Federalists. Do you see the inference? At the Democratic Convention, to be held in Baltimore on the 27th of this month, we will nominate for President, the Great Democrat of Blank State, Millstone of Milastoga!"

"Yes we will!" solemnly ejaculated Sperme Oyle, raising his gouty hands from his round paunch.

A slight flush passed over the pale face of the Statesman; his calm blue eyes encircled by their dead white enamel, gleamed with unusual fire.

"Remember General, how we were floored in 1840?" he said with a hesitating accent, as though some unpleasant memory was revived by his words.

"O, set yourself easy on that score! I have long since removed the cause of that disaster; in fact the Indian will never trouble us more!"

As he spoke in a low whisper, with a marked accent, the three friends leaned over the table, until their faces well-nigh met. So deeply were they absorbed in their topic of discourse, that not one of the three heard the sound of the unclosing door, nor saw the form which silently advanced toward the table.

"Cass is out of the way this heat," whispered Skinner, using a lively metaphor from the race course; "Dick Johnson killed Tecumseh, but the bodies of all the dead Indians, from here to the rocky mountains, won't make a stairway for him to ascend to the Presidential chair. As for Calhoun, nullification lies on his popularity like a nightmare. Buchanan has declined; Benton is silly in his notions of the currency. All then, are swept from your path, all save Van Buren and——"

"YONAWAGA!" said a deep guttural voice, that thrilled to their hearts, like a death-knell. With one bound they sprang to their feet, while a simultaneous ejaculation burst from their lips:

"The Indian!" they exclaimed, and then stood like statues of dumb astonishment. Here Sperme Oyle, his red face turned to the color of a shroud, his mouth wide open, and his small eyes glaring from their heavy lids; there Skinner, crushing the quill between his teeth, as his head was turned hurriedly over his shoulder; in the centre the Statesman, his ponder

ous form rising to its full stature, while his pale face burned in each cheek with a spot of crimson, and his blue eyes glared from their white enamel.

At the other end of the table, confronting the Statesman, stood the Indian, his proud form clad in a blue frock coat, a rich shawl wound over his chest, as with folded arms and deep burning eyes, he surveyed the astonished group.

"Yonawaga is here!" he said in that deep guttural voice, while his dark eyes flashed scorn, and his upper-lip quivered with indignation.

Even in the moment of their surprise, the Statesman and his friends could not deny that the bearing of their unexpected visitor was striking—nay, majestic. His dark hair falling in long straight locks to his shoulders, was surmounted by a purple cap, edged with gold, and fitting closely to the crown of the head. The folds of the shawl, rich and varied in its colors, marked the breadth of his chest, while the blue frock coat with its single row of gold buttons, displayed the outlines of his muscular yet graceful form.

His dark eyes flashing their vivid light from compressed brows, were centred on the Statesman's face. His bronzed skin glowed with a deep and burning flush. His chest heaved slow and heavily beneath his folded arms.

"Yonawaga is here," he again repeated, surveying the group, "Here Great Man, to tell to you in his rude Indian way, a story of robbery and wrong! Pardon Yonawaga if his wild-forest fancy, pictures his wrongs in hues too vivid for your eyes, O, Great Man! For Yonawaga is but a rude Indian, and feels like a rough child of the woods, and talks like a man who can redress his wrongs!"

There was enough in the tone and manner of this speech, to indicate that the speaker, who delivered himself in clear guttural tones, combined the knowledge of a white man with the stern impulses of the warrior of the woods.

The Statesman bit his lip, but made no reply. Sperme Oyle's face indicated blank surprise, touched with terror; Flynte Skinner commenced paring his nails, with an indistinguishable velocity.

"Shall I speak, O, Great Man?" exclaimed the Indian, bending over the table in a bow of mock politeness, while a sneer that was almost demoniac curled his upper lip. "Or shall I hand this written history of my wrongs—yes, wrongs done by *great men*—to Manhattan, who will present them to your Democratic Council, soon to be held in Baltimore?"

Millstone turned his face aside from that Indian's gaze.

"If Manhattan—my grand opponent for the Presidency—obtains those papers, he will use them," the thought darted like an electric flash over his mind; "If he uses them, I am lost!"

"Speak sir," said General Skinner in a brisk tone, as he dashed the papers about the table in order to conceal his agitation, under the appearance of hunting for a letter: "We have nothing to fear. Soh, speak on, my good fellow."

As for our unctuous friend, named by some prophetic god-father, *Spermo Oyle*, he sat as silent as a sack of Indian meal, rubbing his gold spectacles between his fingers.

"It is well!" said Yonawaga, "You will hear me. It is a strange story. We must be alone."

He locked the door of the room, placed the key in his pocket, and drew a chair near the table. He sat there in the light of the lamp, his arms folded on his breast, while he surveyed the group.

While Millstone regarded him with a fixed stare, as much indicative of terror as wonder, he commenced his singular narrative.

"I am an Indian, but I will speak in the tongue of the white man, while I use the warm figures of my native speech. Pardon me if my words chance to burn into your hearts, for my wrongs and the wrongs of my race, have turned my blood into fire. Forgive me, if my story proves somewhat abrupt and wild: I have so much to say, that I know not where to begin. But O, Great Man, I will tell the history to your ears, and then ask redress at your hands!"

He paused, and that silent sneer quivered on his lip again. The Statesman moved uneasily in his seat, but the eye of Yonawaga seemed to hold him in his chair, with its strange fascination.

"Go on, my friend; we are always willing to hear the petitions of the unfortunate," said Millstone, after a brief pause, with a dignified inclination of his head.

"Then for the first scene in my history. It was on a mild summer night, in 1838, just six years ago, that four men had secreted themselves in the President's room of the Milastoga Bank. It was a warm summer night, and yet the doors were fastened, the shutters closed. Were these men robbers, that they buried themselves thus on a sweltry night in July, in a small and confined apartment? That could not have been, for they wore sleek broad-cloth coats, and sat in easy chairs, and talked around a table, covered with bank notes. I see them now, seated around that table, with the light of a lamp shining in their faces. The tallest of the four, that man of portly frame, pale face, blue eyes, head bent to one side, is—do not shudder, Mr. Millstone—a *Statesman*! Opposite him is a man of slender figure, and ferret face—a *General*! Do not turn your face away; it is true, General Skinner. By his side sits a huge bulk of flesh, with gold spectacles on his nose—a *Colonel*. Does the light hurt your eyes, friend Oyle? Next him, a square-built person with sharp eyes and a broad head; a *Major*! Open your eyes and shrug your shoulders, if you will, but it is true! Would you like to hear their conversation? Let us go to the President's room of the Milastoga Bank; seat ourselves in a dark corner; listen to those low-muttered whispers:

"You want to be President," said the General to the Statesman; "To be President of these United States, you must have money!"

"How shall I obtain money in a fair and honorable way?" said the Statesman, with a pleasant smile on his pale face.

"I will tell you," said the General, "You are aware that the Government is about to pay \$200,000 to the half-breeds of the Yonawaga Indians. Now you have influence with the President; procure me the appointment of Commissioner. I will go out to Prairie Du Morne, with \$200,000 of specie in my possession, but I will not use it to pay a single claim!"

"What! You do not mean to rob the poor Indians!" said the Statesman, seized with pious horror.

"Rob the ——!" said the General, naming an intimate friend. "Here is the way I will manage it. Do you see these notes of my Bank, which now are scattered over this table? Look you; they are prettily engraved, and handsomely signed with my name as President; the Colonel as Cashier. It is true they do not pass at par, in New York or Philadelphia, but the poor devils of half-breed Indians, will they know the difference?"

"Still will this transaction bear the test of a severe moral scrutiny?" said the Statesman, opening his blue eyes with a look of profound integrity.

"Who will dare accuse you of fraud, you the moral and high-minded Statesman?" resumed the General; "I pay the Indians in Milastoga notes; I receive United States money for my paper. We will share the profits. All you have to do is to procure from the President my appointment, as Indian Commissioner!"

The white face of the Statesman was clouded with an expression of deep anxiety.

"These claimants are half-breeds of the Yonawaga tribe," he said, in a slow and deliberate tone: "Will they not have to *prove their claims*? Will not your commission constitute you a Judge of their rights, invested with the power of deciding who is, and who is not, entitled to the benefits of the money?"

"Capital—you give me an idea!" exclaimed the General, bounding from his seat: "I am Judge of their claims—good! I take the Colonel and the Major with me as lawyers, who will hunt up evidence for the half-breeds, and make out their claims for a consideration—better! There will doubtless be many a case, where the poor ragged Indian cannot produce either written or oral proof of a claim, which is undoubtedly correct. The Colonel here will sound him; the Major by my side, will advise him. 'Come Tunky-wunky, or whatever your name is, you say you have a claim for \$10,000. It cannot be proven, but the Colonel here will give you \$5,000 for it! In this way, we will be enabled to realise many a neat \$5,000,—charge the United States the full \$10,000,—and *share the profits*!'"

"The scheme is magnificent!" said the fat Colonel.

"Could'n't be better!" exclaimed the Major, whom you could tell among a thousand, by his muscular form and broad head.

"Here,"—exclaimed the Statesman, drawing a parchment from his

pocket, "Here is the commission, which I procured from the President on Thursday last. The fact is, my dear General, I anticipated something of the kind, and prepared this agreeable surprise for you. You are directed to proceed to the Prairie, in less than a month, by the last day of August. Prepare your notes, my dear friends, and start forthwith!"

"That night these good friends parted; the General with his two lawyers, to proceed to the banks of the Mississippi, and assemble the miserable half-breeds of the Yonawaga tribe; the Statesman to hasten to his home, and prepare sound moral speeches, for the next session of Congress.

The Indian paused, and surveyed the countenances around him. Never had words so rude and bold, produced an effect so tremendous. Sperme Oyle had fallen back into his chair; Flynte Skinner was on his feet, clenching his hands in rage; the Great Man sat silent and motionless, with his head drooped on his bosom.

It is true, the manner of Yonawaga was warm, energetic, even eloquent. It is true, that his voice now rippled in accents of affected meekness, now hissed in withering scorn, now thundered in tones of irrepressible indignation. Neither can it be denied that his attitudes were various, exciting, commanding; now starting from his seat, he flung his clenched hand over the table, almost into the face of the Statesman; now he stood erect with folded arms, and immoveable features; again he resumed his chair, while his whole appearance indicated a man engaged in a polite and affable conversation. Yet why should his words cause such strong signs of emotion on the part of the Statesman and his friends? They were horror-stricken with this story of profligacy in high places; thrilled to the heart with pious abhorrence of all such unholy deeds; nothing more.

"Did you ever hear of an act of colossal plunder, like this?" whispered the Indian: "You are familiar with the history of Rome, you, my dear Millstone? Did you ever read of a fraud, so magnificent in detail, so contemptible in purpose, as this, planned by a—*great* Statesman and his tools? I do not ask you to look to Rome in her glory, when demi-gods wore her purple, but in the days of her deepest degradation, when her offices were sold at so much per cent., by a crowned Eunuch! Was ever the basest of that Eunuch's minions guilty of a fraud like this?"

General Skinner could hold his peace no longer. "It is false," he cried, starting from his seat, "It never occurred, it——"

"You must be the very ——!" ejaculated the incautious Oyle; "To report it word for word! Well, Millstone—eh? What? Does'n't he know it all?"

"Our friend is indulging his taste for the ridiculous and improbable Romance!" exclaimed Mr. Millstone, brushing a fly from his nose with his hand that trembled with agitation. "That is all!"

"Yes, it is a Romance!" said Yonawaga, "The red man—who has perused the books of your white race—confesses it! It is a fable, an id

fable, as false, as baseless as the winds! But you have not heard it all, my dear Millstone. There are some scenes yet to come, which will thrill your great heart. Will you listen to the Second Scene?"

Yonawaga bent forward, while his whole countenance shone with the light of intellect. His large dark eyes dilating, were fixed on space, while his lips parted with an expression of joy, and his hands were outspread, as if to embrace some object of his love.

"It is there!" he said, in a deep voice, ringing with the accents of transport, "It is there, in its pride and glory, rolling on from the mountain to the sea, as it has rolled for ten thousand years! Do you see the moonbeams floating over its bosom? Do you hear the sullen waves beating against the crumbling shore? Do you see that high bluff, rising dark and gloomy, from the waters, and spreading in a level plain, green and waving, with the grass of the prairie? Yonder, not many hundred yards from the river, that plain ascends into a rugged mass of rocks, which shuts out the view to the eastward, like a colossal wall.

"And here, between the wall of rocks and the river, a village of tents, starting from the green sod, arises in the calm, clear light of the moon. Some of these tents are white as snow; you see them glaring out upon the night, from the background of rocks. Some are dark as the raven's plume; they are made of the skins of wild beasts; pitched on the very edge of the river bluff, they overhang the dark waters.

"And the moon, rising in yonder sky, round and full and glorious, sheds her soft light over all! The plain, backed by the wall of rocks, the clustering tents, some white, some dark, the broad river sweeping far away, each wave glistening in silvery light!

"Now and then a cloud, light, soft, and feathery, floats around the moon like a scarf about a maiden's limbs. Then mild shadows fall over the river and the plain; for a moment all is dusk and dim. Again, like a maiden casting her scarf aside, the moon flings the cloud from her bosom; then all is light again. Then the rocks so dark and rugged, are silvered on their summits again; then the white tents glare like ghosts, the dark ones gloom like warriors, with snow upon their crests, the river—ah! The Sea-River rolls on its way, with moonbeams glancing on its waves once more

"How name ye this river, whose sullen roar now fills the night? How name ye this plain, dotted with tents, and backed with colossal rocks?

"The Sea-River is the Mississippi; the plain of tents, is the Prairie Du Morne, the Prairie of the Rocks.

"And these forms that wander silently among the tents? These forms clad in the furs of the panther, or the hide of the deer, or attired in the unseemly garments of the white man? These forms, that in their degradation, yet bear about them some marks of their forest lineage, these faces dusky yet, though paled by the mixture of the white man's blood—dusky yet, and stamped with those iron features, that quiver into life at the scent of a foeman's blood?

"These forms, wandering among the tents, or standing in groups of two or three, or bending over the dark river, which once belonged to their father's? How name ye them?"

"The Last of the Yonawaga tribe! Yes—God of the Indian, who a Pure Spirit, dwelt in our hearts, when the Christian race bowed down to things of wood and stone, forgive this agony!—The Last of the Yonawaga tribe, polluted by the white blood flowing in their veins, at once ignorant of the great forest knowledge of their fathers, and of the white man's skill, are clustered here, upon the Prairie of the Rocks, by the waters of the Sea-River.

"Yes, what the white man's knife has spared, what his fire-water, has failed to level with the brute, what his Plague—which horrible and loathsome, walks hand in hand with his Religion and his Fire-water—has not altogether crushed, these, the Last of the Yonawaga race are here!

"They have hurried from their forest haunts, to meet the Commissioner, sent by the Great Father in Washington, to pay them for *their fathers'* lands. Yes, they have gathered in these tents to receive a miserable pittance, for this beautiful land—these wide-swelling prairies, these immeasurable forests, these inland seas, and ocean-rivers—which the Great Spirit gave to his Red People forever.

"Who shall dare to sell the Gift of the Great Spirit for Gold?"

"Look yonder by the waters of the river. On that high bluff, his head bent down, and his dark eyes fixed upon the waters, stands a young warrior, with a panther's skin wound over his broad chest, a buffalo's hide drooping from his right shoulder to the ground. Where is his war-hatchet, where his rifle, where his knife? Ah, they are all gone: look! In that hand, which should grasp the tomahawk, he holds a white man's book!

"By his side, clinging to his left hand, and looking up into his face, with those deep blue eyes, that are so strangely contrasted with her flowing dark hair, bends a maiden of thirteen summers, whose young form has not yet ripened from the girl into the woman.

"These are Brother and Sister; these born of a white mother, and reared in the Missionary's camp, are yet the children of Elkawana, the great warrior of the Yonawagoes!

"Look—the Young warrior turns; holding his sister by the hand, he seeks that solitary white tent, which stands in the centre of the encampment, towering above all others. The beams of a lamp shine from its parted curtains, while over its roof the banner of the white race, the banner of the stars, with belts of blood and snow, floats on the breeze, in the calm soft light of the moon.

"The young warrior stands in the door of the tent, with his sister by his side, and the light of the lamp pouring full in their faces. A table is there, in the centre of the tent, covered with papers, notes and gold. Yonder, slender as a blasted pine, stands the Indian Commissioner, *the General*! His face sharpened like the flint of the roadside, stamped with all the cunning

of the fox, glows in the wan light, while his thin lips wear a meaning smile. On either side stand his ministers, here the Colonel, with his round and oily face; there the Major with his stout form, wide cheek bones, and broad head.

‘Well Sir, what do you want?’ exclaims the General, swelling in his gay uniform, like the carrion buzzard in eagle’s plumes.

‘I am here for justice!’ said the young Indian. Then gathering his blue-eyed sister to his heart, he cried: ‘We are here for justice! We the children of Elkawana!’

‘That is, *you say* you are the children of Elkawana,’ said the General, as he walked briskly to and fro, winding his sash about him, or picking at the buttons of his coat; ‘Prove it, prove it! That’s the point my friend!’

‘Dare you deny that I am the Son of Elkawana?’ said that young Indian, fixing his eyes on the General’s face, as he folded his arms across his breast.

‘Don’t try to bully me! Your fierce looks and proud airs, won’t serve you here. You say, ~~that~~ you are the Son of Elkawana, whom the government at Washington, owed fifteen thousand dollars for lands. Prove it. Elkawana has been dead these ten years. You say that you were reared in the camp of the Missionary; he, doubtless knows that you are the son of the old chief; let him stand forth and prove it!’

‘Ah, the good old man, in the dark robe with the cross on his bosom, has gone home to the Council fires of the Great Spirit. He was my only friend; he is dead!’

‘Well—w-e-ll! Where’s your proof then? Do you suppose that I’m a fool? Do you think that I am going to pay you \$15,000, on your mere word, or the mere say-so of your half-breed Indians? You say that Elkawana was married to this white woman, your mother? Have you the marriage certificate about you?’

‘Then this creature of an hour, this lacquey of circumstance, who had crawled into power by licking the spittle from the shoes of the great, stood on tip-toe, folded his arms, and tried to look a warrior.’

‘The young warrior bent down his head, while his blue-eyed sister clasped his right hand in her little fingers, and looked up tenderly into his face.’

‘At this moment—look! The Colonel steals from his master’s side and approaches the Young Indian.’

‘Sell your claim to me,’ he whispers; ‘It is worthless, but I will give you five thousand dollars for it!’

‘He was a very fat man, that Colonel, with gold spectacles and small eyes, hid away under heavy lids, yet look at the benevolence of his heart! Here is a poor Indian, with a worthless claim, and yet this good gentleman, out of pure charity, will give him five thousand dollars for it!’

‘The Indian did not raise his head, nor speak a word.’

‘Hold a moment, Yonawaga,’ whispered the Major, also drawing close

to the young Indian's side, 'I will give you five thousand dollars, a blue uniform, and a pair of pistols, for this *worthless* claim!'

"Who will say, that this man with the high cheek bones, and a broad forehead, was not a pure Philanthropist?"

"The Indian slowly raised his head. There, before him, at the head of the table, folding his arms across the blue uniform, which he desecrated, stood the Judge of the poor Indian's rights, the Commissioner from Washington, the General of——what? Milastoga bank notes.

"*I will seek Justice where it is not sold!*" exclaimed the young warrior, as he stood there, his form towering like the poplar of his own forests, his dark eyes flashing scorn upon the Robber of his People.

"He stooped and gathered his blue-eyed sister to his heart. One kiss, a warm embrace, and he was gone.

"The General looked around; the child with smiling blue eyes and dark flowing hair was before him; but the Brother had passed from the tent, like a vision.

"Morning came. They searched for that Brother, the son of Elkawana, through the encampment of the Yonawagas, the Commissioner and his tools. His sister was found in the care of an aged Indian woman, but Yonawaga had disappeared.

"Without a dollar to buy him food, nay, without a crust of bread to cheer his way, with but the panther's hide on his breast, the buffalo robe drooping from his shoulder, the staff clenched in his right hand, Yonawaga had started on his journey of one thousand miles. He had gone to seek justice where it was not sold!"

Again the Indian paused. His brow moistened with large drops of sweat, every feature of his bronzed face convulsed with emotion, he paused and looked around. This time no answer awaited him.

The Statesman and his friends were silent. They sat around the table, gazing vacantly in each other's faces, while that spacious chamber seemed to grow terribly warm, strangely silent, even as the last word quivered on the Indian's lip.

"How do you like the second scene in our Romance?" said Yonawaga, with a glance of scorn. "Does it surprise you like the first?"

Still no answer. Millstone bit his nether lip, Skinner demolished another quill; Oyle rubbed his gold spectacles.

"Are you silent, my friends? Then by your leave, I will continue our Romance. Listen to Scene the Third!"

"It is very warm!" exclaimed Millstone, pulling at his white cravat, "throw up the window, somebody!"

CHAPTER NINTH.

THE MAN OF THE HERMITAGE.

—"It was a cold and dreary night. The autumn leaves were falling ; the moon struggled dimly through piles of floating clouds. The wind sighed along the forests like a voice from the dead ; low-toned, moaning and sullen, as the last groan of a dying warrior.

"By the light of this dreary November moon, let us look forth upon the night. Yonder, encircled by a grove of forest trees, a white mansion breaks upon our view ; we behold its walls through the bare limbs that rise against the leaden sky. All is silent, save the moaning of the wind, but hark ! A footstep echoes along yonder walk, which shaded by trees leads to the mansion door, and a form—yet hold ! Ere we gaze upon that form we will enter this mansion ; yonder from an uncurtained window, the mild gleam of a taper steals out upon the desolate night. Let us enter the chamber lighted by this taper.

"An old man sits there by the table, his shrunken form lost in the large arm-chair ; his right arm leaning on a crutch. An old man with snow-white hair, rising above his wrinkled brow, while his face sunken in the cheeks, withered in the lips, faded in those eyes now dim with age, is yet stamped with the marks of a warrior soul.

"He sits there by the table, with the light upon his withered face and snowy hair.

"All around the table is light, but the distant corners of the room are dark ; you do not see the pictures that line the walls, you do not behold those tokens of esteem which have been sent to the weak old man, by men of renown, warriors in the camp, aye, kings on the throne.

"His short dry cough, his earnest gaspings for breath, alone disturb the silence of the room. His left hand clasps a portrait in miniature, while his dim eyes peruse the likeness there ; a mild and beautiful face, which once was pillowed on the old man's breast.

"On either side gazing on the white-haired warrior, with mute respect and awe stands a man, clad in splendid attire, which shames the plain black coat of the old man. This figure in the attire glittering with stars and orders, is the Ambassador of the King of France. That form clad in a green uniform, burdened with gold trappings, is a renowned General from the south. He has been wounded in his last battle ; he stands there leaning on his cane, while his dark visage half concealed by his black beard, glows with admiration as he gazes upon the warrior's face.

" 'General,' says the French Ambassador, 'My king has directed me to request your permission to sit for your portrait, which will be taken by an

artist whom his Majesty has sent over from France. My king has also directed me to say to you, that this Portrait will be hung upon the walls of his palace, beside the portrait of La Fayette.'

"Your king is very kind!" answered the old man, with a smile; 'Tell his Majesty to send his artist, and also tell him that I hope the day will come, when my picture may hang between the portrait of La Fayette and the portrait of—the *President of the Republic of France!*'

"General!"—the Mexican warrior advanced and spoke in a foreign tongue—'Defeated in my last battle, an exile from my native land, I have come to look upon the Hero of New Orleans.'

"You are welcome sir," exclaims the old man, taking him kindly by the hand. 'From this moment, until you wish to depart, my poor house is your home.'

"As the Mexican exile bowed over his cane, thrilled to the soul by the kindness of the old man, another form advanced from the shadows of the room.

"It was a wild and haggard form, covered, from head to foot with the dust of the highway, the mud of the swamp. It stood there before the old man, glaring upon his face, with eyes dilating with famine. The warrior raised his eyes and gazed upon the intruder. He beheld the panther's skin which enveloped his chest, torn in an hundred places; the briars of the forest had rent the buckskin leggings from the knee to the ankle; the moccasins on his feet were worn to tatters.

"Wild in the glare of his eyes, gaunt and haggard in that bronzed face, with the long matted hair hanging in thick locks to the shoulders, poverty and want and suffering written upon every line of his countenance, every inch of his form, the stranger stood there, between the two richly clad visitors, gazing silently in the old man's face.

"You are an Indian," said the old man sternly, for he liked not the sight of a red man's visage, 'A vagabond Indian! I have sympathy for the brave, or industrious man; for the coward or the sluggard, none! Go, sirrah—in yonder room, a table is spread; go and eat. No man that ever crosses my threshold departs without meat and drink. When you have eaten, begone!'

"The ragged Indian covered with dust and mud, proudly folded his arms; his eyes brightened by famine, shone with a deeper light.

"I stand here, not for meat or drink, but for justice!"

'Hah!' exclaimed the old man, shading his eyes with his withered hand. 'I have wronged you then. You are no vagrant Indian——'

'I am an Indian! I have come a thousand miles on foot—I have swam rivers, dared the peril of cataracts, journeyed through pathless ravines, ascended rugged mountains, made my bed on the hard earth, plucked my food from the briars by the way—I have come a thousand miles on foot, to behold you, Man of the Hermitage. I am here; I ask for justice!'

"The old man's faded eye began to burn.

"Who are you?" he cried, starting forward in his chair.

"At New Orleans in the thickest of the battle, a wild Indian fought by your side. Wherever you rushed, there he was, still at your side; when danger menaced you, it was his arm that shielded your bosom from the knife or bayonet. Whether your horse dashed over the faces of the dead, or disappeared among the mists of the fight, or headed the charge of warriors, that Indian with breast and arms bared for the fight, and the red plume waving over his head was there, by your side!"

"Yes—yes, I remember him!" cried the old man, while his eye flashed with all the fire of his youth; "I remember him, with his breast bared and the red plume waving from his brow! He was near me in the bloodiest moment of the battle, his rifle carried a death in every ball. I remember once, separated from my men, three red coats attempted to drag me from my horse. One seized my bridle-rein, one grasped me by the leg, another tried to clutch my sword arm. Suddenly the man at the bridle-rein fell back with a howl; a bullet had pierced his heart; ere I could turn, the soldier at my boot sank down with his skull cloven in two, and the Indian with the red plume and bared breast, stood before me. The other soldier took to his heels; I can see that Indian even now, as he slowly raised his rifle, and brought him down at a distance of an hundred yards. As the soldier fell, the Indian stooped, and picked up something from the dust, beneath my horse's hoofs. It was the eagle's head from my sword. It had been carried away by the same bullet that laid the British soldier a corpse. That was a brave Indian. His name was Elkawana!"

"Here is the eagle's-head, which he carried over his heart, until the hour of his death!" exclaimed the Indian, flinging the piece of silver on the table.

"Who are you, Sir?" cried the old man, clutching the ornament with an eager grasp, "How came you by this?"

"My name is Yonawaga. I am the Son of Elkawana!"

"At that word the old man, even he with the white hairs and wrinkled visage, started to his feet—

"Gentlemen," he cried, turning to his richly attired guests, "You will excuse me; I have business, alone with this Indian!"

"In a moment the aged Indian was alone with the Man of the Hermitage.

"Now, Sir, speak. Who has wronged you? Can I redress your wrong? If money will do it, all that I have is yours! Speak—tell me this wrong! I remember that scene! So—this is the eagle's-head. Your father was a brave man!"

"A young Indian—the last of his race—stood one summer night, in the centre of a desert prairie. The moon shone on his brow; the mounds that marked the graves of his fathers, arose before him. That Indian's

thoughts were sad and bitter. Yonder moon shone in that sky, ten thousand years ago! Then my fathers were a mighty people; their numbers were as the leaves of the forest, or the sands on the shore. The moon shines as calmly now, from the blue sky, but its beams only light up the graves of my fathers. Where are their children? Where? Ah—the tribe of the Yonawagas, which once overspread the land, is now dwindled down to three hundred miserable wretches, whose veins are polluted with the blood of a strange race! In place of the glory of the war-path, the sway of forest and flood, which was their's in the days of old, they have—the Plague which rots their bodies into dust, the fire-water which gnaws the soul from their brains—

“You were that Indian? You, the Son of Elkawana?”

“Yes, General, it was I that stood gazing upon the graves of my fathers—which were marked by the solemn mounds of death—gazing upon the last wreck of a mighty people, sheltered in rude wigwams, that were scattered over the prairie. In that moment of my desolation, a thought from God shone into my soul. I knelt upon the mound, even there, upon its summit, towering above the sea of that boundless prairie. I swore by the GREAT SPIRIT whom my fathers worshipped, by his Son—that JESUS, who had died for me—even the red man—in a far land, eighteen centuries ago, to re-create the INDIAN PEOPLE! To save them from the bayonet, the plague and the fire-water—to combine a thousand scattered tribes in one nation—to rear the altar of that nation's rights, beneath the shadows of the Rocky Mountains, where the dregs of a corrupt civilization could not come—to unclothe the rude red man the knowledge of the white race—in one word, I swore to take the wild Indian, with his great impulses, his savage energy, and direct those impulses with the Revelation of Jesus, and shape that energy with the arts and sciences of the white man!”

“You an Indian, formed this plan! You an Indian, swore to build a thousand scattered tribes in one great nation, by linking the knowledge of the Christian, with the wild, fierce energies of the red man? It was a noble thought; worthy the great brain of a hero! Now for the wrong, my friend, the wrong—”

“The Government of the United States owed us, the wreck of the Yonawagas, two hundred thousand dollars, for lands which our fathers had sold. I—the last of the Chiefs—the Son of Elkawana, reared in the camp of the Missionary, unfolded this plan to my brethren. They were half-breeds, General, scorned alike by the pure Indian tribes, and the white race, whose mingled blood flows in their veins. To these rude half-breeds, I revealed the way to a national existence, to greatness, and happiness! Whether from love to me, as the last of the chiefs, or from a warm sympathy with my plans, I know not, but they said to me with one voice, *When the morrow comes from the great father at Washington, take it; do with it, and we will follow you, as you will!*”

" 'With this money you would have removed your tribe? Collected other tribes around you? Purchased the implements of husbandry and art? It was a magnificent idea, Yonawaga!'

" 'Even so, General! The Commissioner from the Great Father at Washington came to the prairie. He summoned the wreck of the Yonawagas to council—

" 'He paid you the two hundred thousand dollars?'

" 'Listen, General! He came to us, with his tools by his side; two base fellows, who went among our people and bought up their honest claims, for one-half their value. Not one Indian received a dollar, who did not first pay one half to these speculators in flesh and blood. He came to us, not with the money of the United States, but with the rags of his own Bank in his hands. He offered the Yonawagas worthless paper, for substantial gold. As for myself, not twenty nights ago, I stood at the door of his tent; I demanded the money which was due to Elkawana's son. I was received with scorn, with contempt, by the Commissioner. He denied my right to the money, dared me to the proof, that I was Elkawana's son, ridiculed my claim as worse than worthless—at the same moment, his tools crept to my side, and offered me five thousand dollars for my worthless claim!'

" 'He did not dare do this?' shouted the Man of Hermitage, in a voice as bold and terrible, as when he gave the word to charge, at New Orleans: 'By the Eternal!'

" 'With that oath quivering on his lips, he started from his chair, the trembling old man became strong again, his right hand clenched, as though it grasped a sword, rose above his white hairs—

" 'By the Eternal! Go to Washington, Indian, go to the President, go Yonawaga! Tell him, that I, ANDREW JACKSON, bid him arrest *this robber!* And not this robber alone, but the man or men who had him appointed, not the servant of theft, but the MASTER!'

As the Indian spoke, he darted to his feet, and with his outstretched finger quivering toward the face of Millstone, he hissed that word in his teeth again

" 'Yes, with his right hand lifted above his white hairs, Andrew Jackson said it, '*Not the servant of theft alone but the MASTER!*'"

Millstone said not a word. The look, the attitude, the tone of the Indian were terrible. The great man could not find in his heart, the word which was to answer him.

Yonawaga proceeded with his strange and mysterious narration.

" 'The old man sank into his chair exhausted by the effort. He trembled from head to foot, yet his faded eye lit up with all the fire of battle.

" 'While I live, Indian,' he said, in that deep battle-tone of his voice, which thrilled a man's blood to hear, 'Not one man, though he were the

meanest wretch in this wide Union, shall suffer wrong, if I can help it. For I have power, Indian, more power, even than when I was President. For at my word,—yes, the word of an old man, who sits trembling in this chair—the DEMOCRACY of this great Union start into action, like soldiers at the trumpet-note of battle. Go, then to the President, Yonawaga; tell him, that I Andrew Jackson sent you! Bid him arrest the robber, and *track out the robber's master!*

“The old man seized a pen, and wrote hurriedly on a sheet of paper.

“Here Indian, is a letter from Andrew Jackson to the President. Take it, and be on your way to Washington before an instant passes. Here is money to aid you in your journey. If you are hungry, there is meat and bread in the next room; take it in your hands and eat as you hasten on your way. Do not pause to eat or sleep, until you stand within the White House, before the President, with this letter in your hand!”

“The Indian cast a mournful glance at his torn and faded attire.

“‘Never mind the dress,’ said the Man of the People, ‘With Andrew Jackson’s letter in your hand, you can go to the White House though clad in a beggar’s rags!’

“The Indian cast one glance upon that aged form, now towering and erect as in the hour of battle, one glance upon that wrinkled face, with the white hair and flashing eyes, and then—while the withered hand of the old warrior was extended to him, as if in the act of conveying a parting blessing—he hurried from the Hermitage.

“Six years of time—an hundred years of wrong—have since that hour passed over the Indian’s head, but never from his heart has gone—even for an instant—the memory of that old hero’s kindness, never from his grasp has parted—no! not once!—that old warrior’s letter!”

Yonawaga rose and drew forth from the packet, which was hidden in the folds of the shawl which he wore, a single sheet of paper, creased, crumpled, and worn by time, yet bearing on its surface the bold signature of ANDREW JACKSON.

“Gentlemen, I utter no falsehood!” he said, displaying the letter before the light, while his lip curled in scorn; “Behold the letter! You are Democrats, Friends of the People—Behold the signature of the first Democrat of the Nation, the Man of the People!”

“Allow me to look at that letter, if you please,” exclaimed General Flynte Skinner, with a pleasant smile and a soft persuasive voice; “Just one moment if you please.”

Millstone leaned forward and gazed upon the Indian, as he replied to this polite request. The great man’s cheek was flushed; his nether lip was pressed between his teeth.

"Indeed General, your hands are so accustomed to fingering bank-notes, that I am afraid to trust you with any other kind of paper!"

The General fell back in his chair, and plunged his hands in his pockets, while his contracted features expressed unmitigated chagrin.

Millstone uttered a deep sigh and shaded his brow with his hands. As for Oyse, he had neither look nor word for anything. His face was as blank as the Thanksgiving Proclamation of a Pennsylvania Governor.

Did General Skinner wish to seize that letter, and hold it by the lamp as he read it, so that it might take fire and burn to cinders?

"Shall I finish my Romance," said Yonawaga, turning from face to face. You do not answer? It is well—I will now pass on to the third part of my story, comprising many scenes. Come gentlemen, you are all aspirants after station and power, come I say, let us enter the WHITE HOUSE!"

CHAPTER TENTH.

THE WHITE HOUSE.

"It was the First of December, a cold dark and dreary day.

"Wrapping his buffalo robe about him, the Indian stood there in front of the White House, gazing now upon its closed door, now on its lofty walls, now on the broad avenues of the city of Washington.

"Tired, fainting, exhausted by the toil of travel, the loss of sleep, the Indian tottered up to the door, and knocked with his clenched hand upon the panel.

"The door was opened by a servant in livery. He surveyed the wild and haggard form before him, yes, with one glance he beheld that toil-worn Indian, with the long dark hair and bronzed cheeks, even as he tried to hide his rags, by winding the buffalo robe closer to his breast.

"Your business?" asked the menial.

"I would speak with the President!" said the Indian, advancing toward the door.

"He is engaged," was the reply, and the door was slammed in the ragged Indian's face. He said nothing, but retreating slowly from the steps of the Palace, he folded his arms beneath his robe and muttered to himself, 'The letter of Andrew Jackson, will gain you admittance to the White House, though you are clad in a beggar's rags!'

"The murmur had not passed his lips, when a gorgeous equipage came rolling on; it paused before the White House door. A person in rich attire sprang from the carriage steps, and advanced to the door. He was

met by the liveried servant, bowing to the threshold. 'This way Count, this way,' cried the menial, 'the President awaits you.'

"The Indian saw the gorgeously attired gentleman, the Count cross that threshold, a welcome guest, where he had been spurned from the door. Not a murmur passed the red man's lips. Still he stood there, gazing upon the closed door. Even while he gazed other equipages rolled along; other guests clad in rich attire passed over the threshold of that door, fair women too, with their soft forms enveloped in silken cloaks, while snow-white plumes floated over each brow, tripped gaily through the hall of the House.

"Night sank down upon the city. The cold winter wind moaning through the long avenues of the city, swept by the Indian, cutting his cheek while it chilled his blood. He was alone in that great town, a houseless wanderer. The leaden sky was above, without star or moon. That was his canopy. The frozen earth was below; that was his bed.

"Still the Indian stood there, while the blaze of many lights flashed from the Banquet Chamber of the Palace. Yes, the same glow of festival light that revealed the waiting equipages with their splendid horses and liveried servants clustered in the street, also shone over the form of that solitary Indian, as with his buffalo robe gathered across his breast, he stood in silence there.

"At last a new soul seemed to fill that Indian's bosom, he strode toward the door, he boldly pushed it open, in a moment he stood in the brilliantly lighted hall. It was but a step to another door; he entered a spacious chamber, blazing with the light of a large chandelier, warmed by a comfortable fire, and furnished with elegant mirrors, luxurious sofas, a splendid carpet on the floor, heavily framed pictures on the walls.

"As the foot of the Indian pressed the rich carpet, a tall form started up from the chair near the fire. It was the form of a man some fifty-two years, old, with broad shoulders, pale face, and calm blue eyes. He was clad in deep black, with a white cravat. At once, the rude Indian knew that he looked upon a great man, a Statesman, perhaps—the President!

"'What do you want here?' exclaimed the Statesman, with a suspicious glance at the miserable appearance of the Indian.

"'I have traveled two thousand miles for justice! I would see the President!'

"'You cannot see him to-night,' exclaimed the Statesman, 'He gives a party to-night, to the Foreign Ambassadors. They are about sitting down to supper. There are a great many distinguished people here, Sirs and Counts, and it is said *one Duke*. The President is much engaged to-night.'

"With these words, behold! the great man turns towards the door, which opens into the Banqueting Room. Look—the Indian starts forward, clutches him by the arm.

"Andrew Jackson told me, that letter would gain me admittance to the White House, though I were clad in a beggar's rags!"

"Even as the Indian displays the unfolded letter, the great man turns, beholds the signature, and reads the brief words that are written there. Does he change color? Is it with reverence, as he beholds the hand-writing of a great man! Does he attempt to take the letter from the Indian's grasp? It is with the wish to preserve the autograph of a hero!"

"Prairie Du Morne—robber—arrest!" he murmurs, "Look you, Indian, do you come from Prairie Du Morne? What do you know of General Skinner?"

"He is a robber! The robber of Indian men and women and children. I am here to demand justice from the President against the trickster!"

"Your name?"

"Yonawaga!"

"Ah—that is singular! Yonawaga? Why here in my hand, I hold a letter from the Prairie, stating that the orphan sister of Yonawaga, has been stolen away."—

"My sister stolen? It is false! Let me behold the letter!"

"Softly, my good friend. This letter is quite as valuable as yours, though not signed by so great a man. Do you know Father Pierre, the Jesuit Missionary?"

"A good man, Sir; the friend of the Missionary who reared me. But why speak of him? He is absent on a journey to the foot of the Rocky Mountains. Had he been at Prairie Du Morne, this General of Bank-notes would not have dared to act as he has done."

"Father Pierre, returned to Prairie Du Morne writes me, to look after you, for he is fearful that you are gone to Washington, where danger may await you. He begs me to hasten your return to the Prairie. Here is the letter; read it——"

"The Statesman presented the letter to the Indian, who seized it with a frenzied grasp.

"It is indeed his signature! Hah! He writes to you in relation to the fraud, by which we Yonawagas have been swindled. *'To you, as a great and honorable man, do I feel bound to disclose this hideous piece of villainy——'* my sister gone from the prairie—who could harm her, so young, so innocent!"

"The Indian, overwhelmed at last by utter despair, buried his face in his hands. Ah, there was white blood in his veins, for tears, hot, scalding, bitter, started from between his fingers, and fell on his heaving chest.

"Come, my good fellow, do not take it so hard. Hurry back again to Prairie Du Morne; seek your lost sister; I myself will attend to your case. This letter acquaints me with all its details; go, my good fellow, every moment you lose, may bring death to your sister!"

"Thus speaking, in a bland pleasant voice, the Statesman with the pale

face and blue eyes, laid his hand within the Indian's, forcing a purse of gold in his grasp.

"The red man looked up into his face with grateful eyes.

"As you deal with me in this matter, may God reward you! If you are faithful to me, the prosperity of a rude band of savages, elevated into a People, shall be your fame forever! If you make a promise but to break it, then I, Yonawaga, will hiss your shame in every wind that sweeps this Continent; I swear it by the Great Spirit whom my fathers worshipped!"

These words yet rung on the air, when the footsteps of the Indian resounded from the Palace threshold.

"Yes, even as he was, he went forth from the Capitol City, his dark eyes turned to the west! The snow came down and whitened his black hair, but he heeded it not. It turned to sleet, to rain, beating against his breast, his brow, but still he hurried on! What cared he for the cold, the darkness without, when his breast within him seemed turned to molten fire?

"Nineteen days passed, and he stood on Prairie Du Morne again. What a sight was there spread before his dilating eyes! Where he had left the green prairie, dotted with tents, bathed in soft moonlight, now all was ice, desolation and darkness! The red wintry sun sank slowly down over the prospect of desolation. The wide prairie white with snow, the river covered with masses of floating ice, the huge black rocks towering above the prairie and the river, these were there, reddened by the last faint glow of the setting sun, but all was silent as the land of shadows. Not a human form, not even the hideous shape of a savage beast, prowling in search of prey, over the ridges of the rocks, met the eye of Yonawaga.

"He knelt on the cold snow. Shivering and in rags, with a fire-like madness burning in his veins, he shouted hoarsely to the winter air. Yes, in his desolation, he called upon the air, the river, the rocks, to give him back his—Sister!

"She had lain upon his breast in sorrow; her face had cheered his soul in many a dark hour, her voice ringing out its merry laugh, had come like music to his heart, in the dread moment, when he, the last chief of the Yonawagas, felt that he was indeed the last of his race.

"Now she was gone, now indeed he was alone—that consciousness pressed coldly, like the finger of death upon his soul. Where was she, his sister, the blue-eyed child with the dark flowing hair? Perhaps desolate and starving in some ravine of the desert, perhaps the prey of some wild beast? Or worse than all—the thought chilled his blood,—stolen by a beast in human form, to become the prey of the savage of the large city, who buys innocence and beauty with his gold?

"Yonawaga was an Indian, but he was a white man in his feelings after all! His limbs stiffened as with the touch of death, his senses faded, the prairie, the river and the setting sun swam round him; he lay there, on the

cold snow, with his face upturned to the leaden sky, while the night sank darkly over the scene.

"Let us leave him there, this rude Indian, and return once more to the White House.

"Scarcely had his footsteps passed the threshold of that gorgeously furnished chamber, when the door leading into the Festival room opened, and a new-comer stood beside the Statesman.

"'Hah—it is you Major!' said the Great Man, as he gazed upon the person before him, whose stout form was enveloped in a thick cloak, while a fur cap concealed the outlines of his broad forehead: 'Whence come you?'

"'From Prairie Du Morne; on urgent business, too!' cried the Major, shaking the snow from his cloak. 'That fool of an agent, at the City of * * * * *, some hundreds of miles below the Prairie, has chosen to act the part of an—ha, ha—*honest man!*'

"'This jesting is ill-timed, Major,' said the Statesman, in great anxiety, 'Where is the General? Where the Colonel? Have you settled with the Indians?'

"'Settled with them? I guess you'll think so, when you see the receipts in the General's possession for two hundred thousand dollars, signed with all sorts of arrows and crow's feet, by these poor devils of Indians, who sold their claims to this amount for *SEVENTY thousand dollars in Milwaukee bank notes!*'

"'Well, well—the General is coming on—he is here with the two hundred thousand dollars in his possession?'

"'There's the difficulty, my dear sir! The Agent at the City of * * * * *, to whom the Government sent the money, refused to forward it to Prairie Du Morne! You see this Father Pierre, and some other persons of like impudence and zeal, sent on a strong Protest to the Agent, against his paying the money, until the Government at Washington were informed of the *'infamous conduct of the Commissioner!'* Those were his very words, Sir!'

"'This is most unfortunate!' said the Statesman, with a lowering brow, 'Bad people, Major, I say bad people may lay hold of this circumstance, and assert that my moral character as a public man, is not above reproach!'

The door of the Banqueting Room opened, and a **DISTINGUISHED PERSONAGE** appeared. Short in stature, clad in a rich Parisian suit of deep black, with an elegant satin stock about his neck, this gentleman slowly advanced, with his hands behind his back, his head sunken on his bosom, while his eyes were uplifted. The lower part of his face was wrinkled into a winning, nay, benignant smile, while his bald forehead, relieved by scattered locks of curling grey hair, was stamped with an expression of anxious thought.

"'My dear Sir,' he said, or rather whispered, in a voice as bland as his smile, 'I am sorry to mention a serious matter to you, on an occasion like

this, but really, there are murmurs in relation to General Skinner, whom I appointed Indian Commissioner last summer, at your especial request.'

" 'Murmurs, did you say?' and the Statesman opened his blue eyes, while his pale face expressed utter astonishment; 'General Skinner——I have mistaken your words, Sir—in fact——'

" 'The Secretary of * * *, is so deeply impressed by these murmurs,' continued the Great Personage, with a polite bow, 'That he has given orders to the Agent at the City of * * * * *, to hold the two hundred thousand dollars in his possession, until otherwise directed.'

" 'This is very singular!' ejaculated the Statesman, who looked as though a chasm had opened at his feet, 'Can General Skinner have acted imprudently, can he have laid himself open to suspicion——'

" 'He has acted like a knave,' exclaimed a deep, earnest voice, that thrilled the Statesman to the heart, 'And he shall receive the punishment of a knave. The Indians shall be called together at Prairie Du Morne once more. They shall be honestly paid; I pledge my honor as a man, to see to it. The seventy thousand dollars, which General Skinner has paid for two hundred thousand, he must lose. Not one cent shall he receive from the Government. He can afford to lose this sum, for I am told that it is all in the notes of the Milastoga Bank!'

That voice thrilled the Statesman to the soul, but the appearance of the man who spoke, filled him with a dread, he had never felt before.

He stood beside the DISTINGUISHED PERSONAGE, his bold forehead, earnest eyes, and strongly marked features, presenting a deep contrast to the countenance of that gentleman.

" 'The Secretary of * * *!' ejaculated the Statesman, as he surveyed the new-comer with a look of amazement; 'May I ask, Sir, what are the nature of these facts, which affect the reputation of General Skinner?'

The Secretary drew his form to its full height, while his bold features flushed with an honest indignation.

" 'These facts will soon be laid before the Senate!' he said, in a cool, tone, as he fixed his eyes upon the Statesman's face. '*This whole nefarious transaction will be sifted to the bottom——*'

" 'I hope it will,' said the Statesman, recovering his bland smile. 'Mr. Secretary, I hope it will!'

"There was silence for a few moments, an awkward and embarrassing pause. The Secretary and the Statesman stood gazing in each other's faces, while the DISTINGUISHED PERSONAGE retired some paces, surveyed them both with his usual bland smile.

"The Major had slunk away into a dark corner of the room; his hard features were livid with consternation.

" 'Come, gentlemen, let us join our friends in the next room!'

"The DISTINGUISHED PERSONAGE stepped forward, gave one arm to the Secretary, one to the Statesman.

"I am afraid that this investigation will reveal the existence of a conspiracy to defraud the Indians," he said, turning his smiling face to the Secretary; "I presume you will not be a candidate for the Presidency in 1840?" he continued with a more benignant smile and winning accent, as he turned to the Statesman.

"Not a word was said in reply: arm in arm the three left the room for the Banquet Chamber.

"Shall we leave the White House, to track the path of Yonawaga once again?"

The Indian surveyed his heavens; they sat like figures of stone. Not a word was said in reply. Millstone gazed in his face, with a glance which mingled awe and fear; Skinner's look as he sunk the nails of each hand into his cheeks, was perfectly demoniac; Oyle's visage was vacant as a piece of red flannel.

"Shall we leave the White House, to track the footsteps of Yonawaga once again?" spoke the deep voice of the Indian, as he rose to his feet, and folded his arms across his muscular chest.

"For six long years he traversed the Prairies of the west, seeking for his sister——" his voice so deep, so bold, so thrilling in its softest tone, now trembled with emotion. He raised his hands and eyes to heaven. "Over those six years, O, God, let the pall of oblivion rest forever! Thy hand shall avenge me and my people, thine eye alone shall look upon those years of suffering and wrong!"

Millstone started from his seat; the solemn adjuration of the Indian thrilled through that spacious chamber, like the voice of an Avenging Angel.

He stood there with his head thrown back upon his shoulders, his face turned to heaven, his hands solemnly upraised. The light streamed warmly over the bold outlines of his neck, each sinew writhing with passion, while his long dark hair fell in scattered locks over his shadowed countenance. They saw his lips move, they beheld his broad chest heave under the folds of the shawl, they heard his deep-uttered words thrilling on the air, as though each sound had been wrung from his soul.

Millstone could bear it no longer; rising slowly from his chair, while his frame trembled like a dry leaf in the autumn wind, he flung his clenched hands in the air, and shouted:

"You are no man! You are a devil—You——"

Even as his pale face was convulsed with the conflict of hideous passions, his utterance failed him and he sank back in his chair, still trembling from head to foot with impotent rage. There was a quick compression of his lip, a hurried movement of his hand across his forehead, and then he exclaimed with a cold smile:

"However, the fellow is crazy. It is of no use to be chafed by a mad-man!"

"After six years of suffering that none but God can know, I am here!" the deep voice of Yonawaga thrilled on their souls once again, as his burning eyes flashed from face to face.

"Here Millstone for Justice! Here—Not to ask you for the lives of these Indians, who defrauded by you at Prairie of the Rock, wandered in the wilds of the far west without a leader. Some, I found frozen in the winter snow—your fire-water had done its work. Some hideous and leprous, lay dead in their wigwams. Your Plague had been there. Some starving and mad with their wrongs, rushed into your white towns and dispatched the first pale-face with the knife. These—my people—my brothers—I found hanging on your gibbets!"

"I am here—not to ask you for their lives! No! No! Though for these you must answer, not only to an Avenging God, but also to me.

"I am here—not to ask you for the gold—which as I was absent on my search of six years, as my brothers never could be assembled again at the Prairie of the Rock—was never paid to us. You at last—overpowering that one honest Secretary, that generous Southron who called you the Robbers' Master—received your two hundred thousand dollars, as the reward of your crime. I am here—not to ask for this, the money of my People—no! no! no! Though for this also, you must answer to God and Yonawaga.

"I am here, not to ask for the gold or the souls of my people, but to demand—MY SISTER! See that you produce her within three days—bring her to me—unharméd, untainted—or else the vengeance I will work upon you, shall be a warning to traffickers in flesh and blood like you, forever!

"But Millstone, Great Man, Statesman that you are—remember! I have searched over the wild western woods, for six years. My sister is not there. If she lives at all, she lives in one of your large cities. If she is dead, give me her bones, and I Yonawaga, will thank you—you the Robber of my race. But should you bring her to me polluted—the toy of the white man's lust—the leprous thing of shame, at sight of whom, her Mother's Ghost would weep! Then—ah!——"

As the terrible picture glowed in all its fearful details before the soul of Yonawaga, a groan quivered from his chest like the howl of a dying war-horse. His eyes sunken in their sockets, glared with a cold glassy light; his parted lips trembled with a spasmodic motion. His look was more like a demon, than a human being.

"Then, even though you were elected President, I would stab you in the same White House where we met, six years ago! Even as the hurrahs of millions broke on your ears, I Yonawaga would put my foot upon your breast, and shout to the nation, Come and look upon the dead body of the ROBBER PRESIDENT!"

Towering in every inch of his stature, the Indian stood there, flushed in each lineament with superhuman passion, while his outstretched finger pointed toward the ashy face of the—Great Man!

"Look you! In three days produce my sister! Or at the bar of your Democratic Council—Convention—call it what you will—to be held in Baltimore, on the twenty-seventh of this month, will I, Yonawaga appear, even as your name is placed in Nomination for President. I will wait till your chance brightens, till the faces of your friends glow with the joy of success. I will wait till your enemies cower in corners, afraid to speak their hatred. I will wait till that moment when you are about to triumph: then, as the Democracy of the Union met in Council, raise their voices to name you President, will I, Yonawaga fling down before them all, this Record of your Crime! Hah! How your enemies will start up from dark corners, how your friends will skulk from the light, how that wide hall will ring with the thunders of a thousand tongues, '*Behold—Behold! The ROBBER would have been PRESIDENT!*'"

Millstone shaded his eyes from the sight of that frenzied Indian. Leaning an elbow on each arm of the chair, he buried his face in his hands. Skinner looked like a convicted felon, pale, malignant, terrified; Oyle like a very fat man, frightened to the verge of an apoplectic fit.

They heard the deep voice of the Indian, and then all was silent. Millstone looked up with a shudder, from between his clenched hands.

"Thank God!" he cried, even he the Great Man, whom his dearest friend had never seen roused into the semblance of an emotion before, "The Indian is gone!"

Is this part of our Revelations a mere fiction, reader? Would to God it were! The names, the characters may be fictitious, but the Great Fact that a crime like this was committed, on a tribe of miserable Indians, is recorded not in this page alone, but in the Judgment book of Almighty God.

Not one crime only, but a hundred crimes similar in depravity, have been committed on the Indian People, by the panders of Great Politicians. Great Politicians—how portentous the phrase! Any man, that can bargain or bribe his way into power, profess one doctrine for the north, another for the south, go brawling through the brothels of Washington by night, and make learned speeches in defence of Christianity, before a Congress or a Supreme Court by day, is a—*Great Politician!*

Such men as these, have made their fortunes for years, by robbing the Indians of the West. Such men as these, have erected Banks, bribed Legislatures, fed their panders and bought their greatness, with the money of the Indian People. Can the People of the United States, the great mass whom the money of these Fraudulent Great Men, can neither buy nor frighten, tolerate their crimes any longer?

For years past, it has been the cant of Politicians—*The Indians cannot be civilized. They cannot ever become an enlightened People. They must be driven away before the march of civilization, crushed to powder, beneath the feet of the white race.*

And why? In the name of that God, who will avenge the wrongs of the Indian, in the name of that Apostle of the New World, William Penn, who never wronged the red man, let us ask, why is this?

Because these same Politicians, having first forced the Indians to sell their lands, in the next place, have swindled them out of the miserable pittance which was offered as a price, and driven them forth, exposed to the ravages of the small-pox, the madness of Alcohol, the craft and trickery of the outcasts of the white race.

In one case, the Indians have displayed their capacity for civilization and self-government, by the formation of a COMMONWEALTH. A paper printed in their own tongue, now rests on my table.

But where has one well-organized plan been carried into action, by Government, for the elevation of the Indian Race?

From the day that the Pilgrim Fathers began to murder them for their land, as wild beasts are slain for their skin, down until the present year of our Lord, 1846, one bloody catalogue of wrong has been the Index to the history of the Indian race.

The dark record of the Indian's wrongs, is only illumined by sudden gleams of light, glorious and beautiful, from the very gloom over which they dart like rays from God. The Moravian martyrs, the Jesuit apostles, the Quaker heroes, stand alone, in the brightness of their deeds. The names of a Heckwelder, a Father Ralle, a William Penn, are written on the page of history, in characters of glory, as the true disciples of the Lord Jesus.

Does God ever avenge the wrongs of a down-trodden People?

Who aided George Washington, when through the long course of an eight years Massacre, with a half-clad and starving band of rebels, he held out against the combined forces of the British Empire? Almighty God!

Who, gazing over this broad Continent, upon the monuments of the Indian's suffering and woe, scattered over the land, from the Atlantic to the Mississippi, from the St. Lawrence to the Gulf of Mexico, will take the sad and miserable remains of a Great People, and from these tribes of the ravine and prairie, build up a mighty Nation?

ALMIGHTY GOD!

At the same hour—between nine and ten o'clock, on the evening of the 1st of May—that this scene occurred in the chamber of the United States Hotel,—another scene, different in character, but as strange and original in its details, was progressing in a room of the Bank President's mansion.

CHAPTER ELEVENTH.

THE HOLY PROTESTANT LEAGUE.

In the centre of a small chamber, bending over a heavy volume, whose pages were lighted by the glare of the lamp suspended from the ceiling, Malachi sat alone, absorbed in his thoughts. His large hands grasping the lids of the book, his face was buried in its pages, while the light shone over his slender form, crouching in the arm-chair, and attired in glossy broad-cloth.

That small room was marked by certain peculiar characteristics.

The recess on either side of the projecting fireplace was filled with a book-case. The solitary window, looking out upon the garden, was veiled with a thick curtain. The carpet was plain and neat; the papering on the walls, dark brown in hue. In the centre of the room, stood a large table, around which were placed twelve cushioned arm-chairs. This table was covered with books, papers, pamphlets and manuscripts of every variety of shape and appearance. Their titles all told the same story, for glancing over that table, you might behold, the History of the Reformation, or the Horrors of the Inquisition, or the Pope Overthrown, or yet again, did your taste incline to the lively and vivacious in narrative, you might read the Extraordinary history of Mon-Clomeristiani, a converted Priest, or Seven years in a Monastery, by MacHowl, the Reformed Monk, or the Wonderful Experience of a Brother of La Trappe, who after being seven years in the gall and bitterness of Rome, was finally brought to a knowledge of the truth, and is now a Minister of the Evangelical Protestant church.

You will please remember, that this delicious phraseology belongs not to us, but to the authors of those refreshing books.

Did your curiosity lead you to examine the smaller pamphlets, your delight and wonder would increase.

Rome the true Anti-Christ; the Pope and the Devil twin-brethren; the Jesuits a band of Perjurers; Account of a Horrible Murder committed in a Papist convent, by two Priests; the Gunpowder Plot; the Massacre of St. Bartholomew; A voice from the Grave against Rome; the Pope a Murderer of the body and soul—such were the titles of a small portion of the amusing pamphlets spread forth, along the table.

Did you unclothe these books? Here were stories to suit every taste, pictures for every eye. The grand staple of these stories, were such lively topics as adultery and murder; perjury, sacrilege, and obscenity, were but the lighter, decorations of those classic narratives. The style too was refreshing, no touches of fiction, to render vice attractive, but a down-right honest grossness, a plain spoken foulness, which would pollute the soul of

any tender maiden, or innocent boy, with a sound English Education, in all that is filthy in fact or literature, without the least demoralizing varnish of sentiment or romance. Rome first, Rome second, Rome always and Rome forever, was the great burden of these stories, and the moral was one unceasing chaunt, Rome is the father of lies, the Pope is the Devil, and every Papist is an Idolator, a Traitor, and a Dog.

You may imagine the choice wood-cuts which adorned these pages. As you read, you wondered where the ink was made, that printed such nauseous words, but when you turned from the letter-press to the engravings, your query was, From what manner of tree, was hewn the wood, that is traced with embodied obscenity, like this?

The delight with which you viewed these books and their pictures would turn to rapture, when you were informed, that they were intended for circulation, not only among the grey-haired and matured, but in the chambers of lovely virgins, in the closets of the boy-student and the uninitiated scholar, nay, in the homes of sweet young wives, who might read them as they rocked their babes to slumber.

Two massive frames varied the sombre hue of the walls, with their glittering gilt surface. One enclosed a parchment, on which in large letters beautifully flourished, was inscribed: "THE CONSTITUTION OF THE HOLY PROTESTANT LEAGUE."

The other environed a strange dark picture, on which at first view an old man's head, appearing among forked flames might be seen. As you looked closer, you saw that the old man's face was stamped with unutterable agony as the flame curled around his white hairs, while his hands were chained to the heavy stake, which uprose at his back. Even the bystanders who stood round—some soldiers with pike and corselet, some citizens in antique attire—seemed touched with a rude pity. For tears streamed over those bearded cheeks, looks of compassion convulsed those wrinkled faces. One face, and one only, was stern, relentless, un pitying. It looked from a low dark window on the right of the picture, upon the agonies of the burning old man. When you looked upon this face at first, you only beheld two large dark eyes, blazing from the gloom of a beetling brow, over the sallow hues of sunken cheeks. Look again, and you beheld those thin lips compressed like a vice, in an expression of settled hatred; that ponderous brow darkened with all the malignity of a lost soul. It was a terrible face to see at any time, but most terrible when viewed in contrast with the face of the burning old man, with the white hair and convulsed features.

The artist had done his work with a powerful hand. You could see the big drops of death-sweat, starting from the forehead of the burning man, while the flame cast a red glow over the faces of the bystanders, and the grim visage looking from the low dark window, seemed to breathe in that crimson light. Beneath was written in a bold round hand: "THE DEATH

OF THE MARTYR LATIMER, WITH THE POPISH CARDINAL LOOKING FROM THE WINDOW.'

Malachi rose with the heavy volume in his hand.

His face not remarkable for its beauty at any time, was now rendered almost superhuman in its ugliness, by an expression of demoniac rapture. As he stood by the table, laying one finger on a paragraph of the opened volume, his form clad in glossy black with a white cravat around the neck, quivered in every nerve with an inexpressible delight. His large eyes black and glaring shone with new fire, his purple lips parted in a smile which would have been grotesque, if it had not been malignant. That entire face with its struggling locks of yellow hair, parted over the bulging brow, glowed with an expression as vivid as it was infernal.

Malachi shook with quiet laughter.

"A capital book; it amuses me!" he exclaimed; "To see how these dogs cut one another's throats, saw off limbs, crack skulls, and tear hearts from yet writhing bodies—all in the name of God!"

His attention was attracted by the picture, which delineated the Death of the Martyr Latimer. Still keeping his finger on that paragraph, Malachi advanced, and gazed long and earnestly on the picture. All the while, he shook with low deep laughter.

"Capital! Just like Calvin Wolfe!" he muttered, "Yet he should have smoked this inscription, in order to give it an ancient look—"

With his finger nail he stripped a long slender piece of parchment from beneath the picture. The inscription in a bold round hand, disappeared with this parchment, and where it had been pasted, appeared in dim Gothic letters, these remarkable words:

"THE DEATH OF MICHAEL SERVETUS, WITH JOHN CALVIN LOOKING FROM THE WINDOW."

"A stroke of policy in Calvin! To buy an old picture of some Protestant atrocity, and by pasting a new inscription over the old one to transform it into a first rate Catholic barbarity! Calvin Wolfe is a man of a quick invention—ha, ha!"

Shaking with deep laughter, Malachi flung himself into the arm-chair.

"Here under my thumb is the account of the whole transaction. When Servetus went into prison, his hair was dark, as the wing of a raven. It was not long before he was brought forth to his death, when it was seen that the mental agony which he suffered, had changed his hair to the color of snow. All the way to the stake he cried, Lord Jesus be pitiful to me! O, my God, have mercy on me! O, spare me, John Calvin, for I am a weak miserable man. Still he was taken to the stake, and in the presence of a large crowd of citizens and soldiers, burned to death. *All the while, from a neighboring window, John Calvin looked upon him, and heard him cry whenever the wind bore the smoke and flame aside, O, Jesus, Sa-*

viour of Sinners, be merciful to me! After he was fairly burned, Calvin wrote a Thesis to prove the dogma: 'The Church has power to put down all heresy by the sword!'—Is it not too good? Here is the picture in print, and there the picture on canvass!"

This time Malachi laughed aloud, holding his hands to his side, while his lips parted in a grotesque smile. Suddenly the sound of measured footsteps struck on his ear; Malachi opened the volume again, placed his elbows on its pages, rested his cheeks in the palms of his hands, while his downcast face assumed an expression of solemn thought. This change, as complete as it was sudden, had scarce taken place, when the door slowly opened. Malachi did not raise his eyes.

Then two by two, twelve gentlemen entered the room, and took their seats around the table.

As though suddenly surprised by their presence, Malachi started up, and beheld the tall form of Calvin Wolfe seated at the head of the table, while the others gazed silently in his commanding face. At a glance Malachi counted twelve persons, ten of whom were clad in deep black with white cravats. The eleventh wore a plain suit of brown, while his companion was clad in the straight coat of William Penn.

"Brethren," said the sonorous voice of Calvin Wolfe, "Permit me to make you acquainted with a zealous brother from the south, who desires to enter our League. Brother Malachi Ham, these are the Elders of the Holy Protestant League!"

One by one the Elders rose, and shook hands with the new brother. The first, a little man with a fat short body a round face and a small nose, turned up at the end; *the Rev. Mr. MacHowl*, a convert from the Church of Rome.

The second, a short wiry man, with thin lips, lank hair and an enormous nose; *the Rev. Dr. Bomb*, the great anti-papal orator. The third, broad across the shoulders, with a marked face and a keen eye; *the Rev. Mr. Blowhard*, as much distinguished for his zeal as his genius. The fourth, a stout gentleman, with greyish hair, light green eyes a jovial laugh and ill-developed teeth; *the Rev. Dr. Grope*, as much celebrated for his enthusiasm as for the number of marriages which he performed. The fifth, a gentleman of portly form, with broad red cheeks and straggling masses of mouse-colored hair; *the Rev. Dr. Bloom*, who wrote poetry, preached sermons for the fashionable ladies and exposed the Pope of Rome, on every occasion. The sixth, a sallow man, with large dark eyes rolling wildly in their sockets, straight stiff hair, and unearthly voice; *the Rev. Mr. Brine*, a gentleman noted for the strictness of his belief; in fact he almost doubted that any man in the room would be saved, except himself and Calvin Wolfe. The seventh, a military looking person with a great white hat, long stiff hair dragging to his shoulders, thick eyebrows and firm lips and chin; *the Rev. Mr. MacFist*, who had as lief fight for his religion as pray for it. The

eight, a demure gentleman, with a very fair skin extremely blue eyes, gold spectacles, and light yellow hair; *the Rev. Mr. Merly*, a quiet man, only to be roused at the name of the Pope. The ninth, a gentleman whose face was never seen by the rich, for he bowed so low, or by the poor, for he held his head so high, was distinguished by a dark visage broken out around the lips and chin, with isolated pieces of beard; *the Rev. Mr. Swizell*, an extraordinary genius, who wrote for the Magazines, compiled all kinds of books from an Annual to a Pictorial Mother Goose, and edited anything that might be going for a reasonable salary. The tenth, a man with a high broad forehead, hollow cheeks, pinched lips, and deep earnest eyes, in fact the very impersonation of a cold-blooded Bigot, who unites intellect with fanaticism; *the Rev. Dr. St. Blew*, who looked upon all Protestant Churches but his own, as heretic and infidel, while the Catholic Faith of Rome, was a mere system of a blasphemous Idolatry.

The eleventh, a mild-faced man, with ruddy cheeks, grey hair and blue eyes; *Friend, Samuel White*, whose strait coat and broad-brimmed hat, betrayed his sect. The twelfth, a tall gaunt man, with a pale countenance, seamed by wrinkles, lighted by large dark eyes and somewhat fallen in between the nostrils and chin, from the loss of teeth; *the Rev. Silas Thompson*, a Preacher of the Wesleyan Faith, whose age no one knew, although his snow-white hair waving to his shoulders, told that he had long passed the Psalmist's period, three score years and ten.

These were the Elders of the Holy Protestant League.

After Malachi had become acquainted with the brethren by introduction, he quietly took his position by the side of Calvin Wolfe, at the head of the table. A silence like midnight prevailed for a few brief moments.

Wolfe's lips moved, as though he was about to speak, but suddenly his pale face flushed with deep crimson, while the glassy eye fired with sudden light, the brow darkening with that solitary vein in the centre. The agitation of the Bank President was apparent, even to the Brothers of the League.

"You are ill?" said the Rev. Mr. Mac Howl, in a soft and silken voice, "Indeed Brother Wolfe, you are quite pale!"

"I am quite well, brother!" replied Wolfe, with a look that froze the blood of the converted Monk; there was something so terrible in that attempt to conceal the agitation which shook his soul. "I never was better in my life!"

Where were the Bank President's thoughts? With the fair and beautiful Marie, who to-morrow at three o'clock, would wind her arms about his neck and whisper, Husband?

With Eleanor the Idiot Girl, who was destined to become the victim of the Mad Doctor's terrible skill? Had she, at this moment, crossed the fatal threshold of Wolf-Eden?

Or were the thoughts of the Bank President centred on that strange dark

form, which arose from the shadows of the large dim chamber, in whose confines he and the Mad Doctor had conversed together?

Future pages of our Revelations alone, can answer questions like these.

"We are met," said Calvin, recovering all his energy, "to put down the Pope of Rome!"

He was evidently the Soul of the League, for every whisper was hushed as he spoke, every eye was turned upon his face.

"This night one year, our League was formed. Brethren, as the President of the association, I have much to say to you; I have indeed, most important intelligence to impart. Before I commence however, I would like to hear some sociable chat, in regard to the great object of all our hopes. Brother Mac Howl, what have you done for the cause in the past year?"

"I have published five editions of my Seven years in a Monastery," replied the affable gentleman: "You know it comprises vivid accounts of murders, seductions, and all manner of blasphemy, intended for circulation among families?"

"And you Dr. Bomb? We may take it for granted, that your zeal has not cooled—"

"Brother Wolfe, I have tried to do my duty," replied the individual with the enormous nose, in a harsh, screeching voice, "Last year, at this time, certain prominent members of my church were in the habit of visiting Papist families. I have warned them of the danger of this course, I have exhorted them to avoid the habitations of the Molator, and I am rejoiced to say to you, now, that my exertions have been crowned with success!"

"I have delivered nineteen lectures against the Pope, with numerous smaller exhortations!" exclaimed the Rev. Blowhard, pounding his fist on the table, as though he imagined himself in the pulpit.

"And I have on most occasions, followed my distinguished brother, with my feeble voice," chimed in the jovial Dr. Grope.

"I have tried to get the Catholic Bishop into a controversy. I have called him all manner of names—Papist—Idolator—Heathen—Leviathan—and yet he dares not engage in a discussion with me!"

As he spoke, the Rev. Mr. Mac Fist thumped the crown of his white hat, with as much energy, as though it were the head of a Papist Idolator.

"I have edited the Magazine of the League," meekly said the Rev. Mr. Swizell, "I flatter myself that the Inquisition has been shown up to some purpose."

"I have endeavored to caution the sisters of my flock, against these idolatrous Popish priests," quietly exclaimed the Rev. Mr. Merly.

"I have preached, not only against Popery, but against those terrible evils which threaten the Peace of the church," groaned the Rev. Mr. Brine, rolling his eyes with an ominous glare; "I mean the Capital Punishment discussion, and Novel Reading. There are men, brethren, who think that the Gallows is not sanctified by the word of God. These men, too, pretend

to belong to his church, and commune with his people? There are also men, who read the impious works of Walter Scott, the licentious abominations of Bulwer, and suffer their wives and daughters to read them. These men also, claim communion with the church of God! Against these fearful evils, the anti-gallows discussion and Novel Reading, as well as against the Pope of Rome, I have borne my humble testimony!"

"Stephen Girard and the Pope of Rome, have occupied my time," spoke the Rev. Dr. Bloom, in his fine musical voice. "The one proscribes the Preachers of the church, and encourages the education of mechanic's orphans. This is dangerous. What need a poor man's child know, more than to read his Bible? Why should a College be established without a single Preacher? As for the Pope, his well-organized army of Jesuits, threaten to overspread our land, with the idolatrous rites of Rome. Mass—my brethren—remember I say it with pain—Mass, I assert, will be said in less than ten years, in the Capitol at Washington!"

"I!" thundered the deep voice of the Rev. Dr. St. Blew, "I have detected a Bishop in my Church, in the act of putting a cross upon the Episcopal Chapel. I denounced him! I also discovered a Clergyman using a Popish hem to his surplice—I exposed him before an audience of three thousand people. These are small things you may say, but still they are omens of the advance of Rome!"

The Quaker Samuel White and the Wesleyan by his side, alone were silent. They gazed in one another's faces, but not a word passed their lips.

Calvin Wolfe arose. Every eye beheld the imposing outlines of his form, every eye was centred on his cold glassy eyes. He looked proudly around the circle, like a man who holds the power of life and death in his grasp, while his nether lip projected in a sneer.

"On Monday night last," he began in a slow deliberate voice, which thrilled through every heart, "A band of American citizens, assembled in town meeting, in the Second Ward of Kensington in this county, resolved—first—to uphold the Bible in schools, and—second—to exclude all foreigners from the privilege of naturalization, until after a residence of twenty-one years——"

A breathless silence pervaded the room. Every eye was centred on the face of President Wolfe.

"This my brethren, forms an era in our history, which will never pass from the memory of man. For what do these Resolutions mean? They mean that a Great Party is rising in our midst, like Elijah's cloud over the famine-stricken land of Israel. The object of this party is to crush the vagabond foreigners, the idolatrous Catholics, who darken our shores like the locusts of Egypt. For twelve years, these paupers of Europe in the hands of the Democratic Party, have ruled the elections in all our large cities. Last year they broke in a body from the Democratic Party, headed by a brawling demagogue, and voted for the Whig Sheriff. Mark the result!

The Democrats enraged at the treachery of their tools, resolve to form a party to crush them forever! The Whigs who always hated the foreigners, the Whigs who have been dragged from the polls by Irish Catholics, beaten by Irish clubs, trampled under the hob-nailed boots of Irish bog-trotters, join with the Democrats. Therefore from one end of the county to the other, glows the slumbering embers of the people's vengeance, against the Idolators of Rome. What is there wanting to fan these coals into a blaze? Behold—this same brawling demagogue goes into the Public School, tears the Bible from the teacher's hands, and tell us Protestants, and the sons of Protestants, that we shall not read that book to our children! Do you mark the result? A band of freemen assemble in the heart of Kensington, where the ragged Catholics swarm in their dens like ants in a mole-hill, and solemnly declare that *We will have the Bible in Schools, that we will not naturalize the Paupers of Europe, until after a residence of twenty-one years!*"

One deep murmur filled the room. Not a word was spoken, but every eye was turned toward the speaker.

"Do you know what this means, my brethren? Does it merely indicate that another party is added to the two corrupt factions already in existence? No—in the name of God—I answer no! You may call it a mere party for a change in the Naturalization laws; you may call it a mere combination against foreigners, in which Infidels, Unitarians, and Deists have a common interest. This is but the surface of affairs! Under the bubbles which float on the surface, I see rising from the waters of strife and commotion, the great form of a CHRISTIAN PARTY, which with the BIBLE in its hands will rule this Union, in fact chose every officer from the Constable of a Township, to the President of Twenty-Nine States!

"This naturalization question is an engine, which God has placed in our hands. Demagogues will seize hold of it and brawl against foreigners, meetings by tens of thousands will assemble to discuss it, every mechanic by his fire-side will ponder it over, with anxious, with painful interest—but, We, the Christian Party in Politics, the Holy Protestant League, working in the dark behind the scenes of political commotion, will shape it to our own ends, and turn the strife of man to the glory of the Living God!"

Calvin's glassy eyes fired with a gleam of burning light, while his broad chest heaved under his attire; and his outstretched fingers quivered like withered reeds in the wind. As he spoke the last five words, his voice deep and sonorous at all times, aroused every heart, like the blast of a war-trumpet.

"How shall we do this?" cried the stern-browed Dr. St. Blew, half-rising from his seat.

"Turn the naturalization question to the glory of God!" exclaimed the startled Mr. Brine, rolling his eyes in wonder—"A bold idea, Brother Wolfe!"

The murmur deepened. 'How shall this be done'—a Christian party in politics'—turn the schemes of men to the glory of God'—rule the nation'—elect every officer from a Constable to the President'—such brief ejaculations echoed through the room.

In a moment all was silent again, and Wolfe resumed his theme :

"Suppose these foreigners, who darken our shores, were Protestants? Would we waste a second thought upon them? The very idea makes you laugh. But they are Catholics, worshippers of images, who hold no faith with heretics and own their vassalage to a foreign despot, the Pope of Rome—therefore will we rise in our might and crush them to powder. They have their Jesuits; we will have ours. They have their Pope; we will have ours. They secretly encompass the land and sea, to make one proselyte, we will go forth in silence and night, and band all the Protestant churches in a holy league, against the common foe. We will make every fireside a battle-field, every pulpit an armed fortress, the Bible shall be our common symbol; our common cry, echoing from fifteen millions shall be, 'Down with the Catholic, Down with the Pope of Rome!'"

His every lineament blazing with deep excitement, Calvin Wolfe stood there, raising the Bible in his clasped hands, while the brethren started with one movement from their seats.

"How will we do this? Here is my wealth—take it and use it for the Holy Cause! Is it not sufficient? Levy contributions in every church, bid the widow give her mite, the orphan boy his last cent! Each offering will be holy in the sight of Heaven, for our object is first put down Rome, but first and last and altogether, to raise on the ruins of the idolator's creed, the pure Christianity of the Saint of Geneva, John Calvin!"

A murmur of deep and sincere applause arose from ten of the Elders: the Quaker and the Methodist alone were silent. As for Malachi, his note of approbation was deepest of all, but his mouth was convulsed with a hideous grin, while his eyes wandered to the picture behind the President, where Calvin was gloating over the death-agonies of Servetus.

"Brother Malachi holds the Plan of this great movement—he will read it for your edification."

Malachi rattled the mass of papers, which he held in both hands, while his face assumed an expression of demure solemnity.

"This plan is conceived in godliness, and brought forth in righteousness," he began, in that smooth musical voice, which he could assume at pleasure.

At this moment the venerable Wesleyan slowly rose from his seat.

"Before you read this plan, let me say a few brief words," he said, in a faint voice, while every eye was suddenly turned upon his face. "This night one year, I was elected an Elder of the Holy Protestant League. I then took upon myself the solemn obligation to do everything in my power, for the great cause of Protestant Christianity. But it appears, my brethren,

that I have sadly mistaken my vocation. Forgive me, if I learned my lessons of Christian duty, at the feet of John Wesley. Forgive me, if during the past year, as the humble Home Missionary, I have traversed the alleys of Southwark and Moyamensing, visiting the sick, feeding the hungry, giving clothes to the naked, the bread of life to the dying. Forgive me, if on one occasion, with my heart bleeding for the sufferings of the Heathens of Philadelphia, I waited on the Catholic Bishop, and found his heart and purse open to the call of humanity—forgive me, for I am a weak old man. I am not at home here, my brethren. You are learned; I, poor and ignorant. You revere the memory of John Calvin. My Bible teaches me to pity, not to follow the Murderer—

Here the old man was interrupted by one simultaneous groan of surprise and indignation.

"He blasphemers!" exclaimed the Rev. Mr. Brine, in his most unearthly voice.

"John Calvin a murderer?" sneered Dr. St. Blew, "Surely old man, you have taken leave of your reason!"

No power of language can depict the ominous scowl which darkened over the brows of the brethren, as though the same heavy cloud had fallen upon them all.

"Farewell!" said the old Wesleyan, moving toward the door, "I am unworthy of your company——"

"Nay, friend Thompson; wait a moment till I speak," said the Quaker, with the ruddy cheeks and snow-white hair, "Our brethren do not understand thee. Dost thou not behold the great and wonderful things which they have done in the past year? One brother has exposed the Pope to his congregation, who pay him two thousand dollars per year, which allowing three sermons against Anti-Christ a week, just gives him for every sermon, the sum of twelve dollars, eighty-two cents and two mills, not counting the odd fractions. Admire his praiseworthy self-denial! Girard College is under his nose, witnessing every hour of the day, that ten thousand orphans have been robbed, in order to build a marble sepulchre, and yet our brother travels all the way to Rome, in order to find powder for his ecclesiastical gun! Another brother preaches for the Gallows and against Novel Reading. Dost thou not esteem the gallows a holy thing, Friend Thompson? Then thou art no christian. Art thou not aware that the reading of novels converted two Bishops of our brother's church, into lovers of lewd women, and bibbers of strong drink? How many Preachers of our brother's faith, have been tried during the past year, for seducing the wives and daughters of their flock? Behold the dread results of novel-reading!"

"A third brother has introduced discord into families, making mischief most devoutly, all in the name of God. A fourth has published a refreshing volume, whose filthy words, and filthier pictures, are dedicated to the cause of God. A fifth, has called this Catholic Bishop, an idolator and a Papist

beast——behold the sweetness of a Christian spirit! And last of all, Friend Wolfe asks us, to join his Christian party in politics, with John Calvin for a model. Perhaps thou dost think this Calvin was a murderer? Thou art very wrong. When he burned Servetus, he merely was teaching the poor Papists, how divine a thing is that Charity, which melts the heart with Love!"

The Quaker took the arm of the aged Wesleyan, and confronted the other brethren of the League.

No words can picture the agitation which these words aroused, in the breasts of Calvin Wolfe and his friends. Their indignation wasted itself for a few moments, in that silent eloquence, which shoots its daggers from the dilating eye, and bites its volumes of spite between the clenched teeth.

"Read on, Brother Malachi!" sneered Wolfe, "Do not heed these elderly persons, whose minds are weakened into second childhood!"

"This conduct is infamous!" growled the Rev. Dr. MacFist, punching the crown of his white hat, "What could you expect from a—Quaker?"

"Practical Deists—eh?" insinuated the jovial Grops, "Dreadful looking things those broad-rimmed hats—eh?"

"As for the Methodists," said Dr. St. Blew, with a sardonic smile, "I must confess that I never had a very high opinion of these vulgar ranters. They deny apostolical succession!"

"So do we!" spoke the hoarse voice of the Rev. Dr. Blowhard, while he grew very red in the face, "With all respect to you, Brother St. Blew, I must confess my candid opinion, that all this talk about an uninterrupted succession, from the Apostles down, is——*hum*——"

"What, Sir? Do not grow violent, sir——" interrupted Dr. St. Blew.

"—*Bug*!" ejaculated Blowhard, squaring his shoulders, and lifting his head with an inclination of scorn.

As one man, the two brethren rose and confronted each other. Dr. St. Blew's fine face was convulsed with zeal, while the Rev. Blowhard's determined countenance glowed with ecclesiastical—fervor. There was every prospect of a long and bitter controversy, when Calvin Wolfe arose, and stilled the clamor with a word:

"John Calvin!" he exclaimed, "We may have our minor differences of opinion, but that name unites us all!"

"William Penn!" exclaimed the Quaker, with his hand on the knob of the door. "Two hundred years ago, on this very soil, proclaimed the holy law of Toleration to a benighted world. Beware how you pollute his soil with the footsteps of Bigotry, beware how you poison this air, with the howl of Persecution."

"John Wesley,"—it was the aged Wesleyan who now spoke, his voice deepened by strong emotion—"One hundred years ago, made his memorable attempt to free the Protestant world, from the blood-thirsty doctrines, the Heathen Deity of the Genevan Persecutor. Wherever that Deity has been

preached, the Lord Jesus has been trampled into dust, while the blood of man and woman and child has flowed in rivers, beneath the smile of this Heathen Moloch! Calvin reigned supreme in New England—behold! Quakers were hanged, old men choked to death, women burnt to ashes! Spare this soil from the wheels of the Juggernaut, do not ask us, who believe that God is LOVE, to bow down and be crushed beneath the feet of your blood-thirsty Deity!"

That aged Wesleyan, who had preached the Gospel in the wilderness, before these reverend men were born, stood there with upraised hands, and white hairs floating to his shoulders. The Quaker calm and smiling, stood by his side.

"Blasphemer!" shouted Calvin Wolfe, raising from his seat, while the ten elders turned their scowling faces toward the Methodist and the Quaker: "Followers of the Deist Penn and the Fanatic Wesley, by virtue of the trust reposed in me, as President of the Holy Protestant League, I excommunicate you, from all fellowship with the brethren!"

There was something impressive in the look and attitude of this remarkable man. His form tall in stature and imposing in its breadth of chest, towered aloft, over the heads of the brethren, while his glassy eyes glared fire from beneath his darkened brow, his lip curled in scorn, as with his up-lifted hands clenched together, he seemed about to hurl the vengeance of Heaven against the heretics whom he solemnly denounced.

A murmur of surprise and admiration, escaped from the brethren. "Brother Wolfe is a remarkable man!" the whisper ran round the table. "Wonderful—great energy—immense wealth—giant mind!"

The aged Wesleyan drew himself to his full height, while a smile of deep compassion, stole over his wrinkled face.

"You excommunicate me!" he said, with an emphasis of pity; and then turning to the Quaker, continued: "It is well, my brother. Let us leave these men to pursue their career of folly, which will end in scenes of blood and flame! Farewell, Calvin Wolfe—remember! While you plot and plan on earth, there is a God above!"

Ere the echo of these words—which thrilled even the heart of the Bank President—died upon the air, the Wesleyan and the Quaker were gone.

"Brother Malachi, now that these weak-minded persons are gone, will you read and expound the Great Plan of the League, in your usual vigorous style?"

Malachi rose, Calmly smoothing his tow-colored hair, aside from his projecting brow, he gazed meekly around the circle. His wide mouth was compressed in an expression of demure sanctity, while his large dark eyes shone from their red circles, with all the fire of a holy zeal.

In a voice, which changed from his usual harsh tones, flowed in accents of deep music, Malachi began to unfold the Plan of the League. Soon, however, his voice swelled with indignant zeal, his slender form quivered

erect, his outstretched hands shook in every finger. The Pope of Rome, the Anti-Christ, the Inquisition, the Jesuits in America; these were the objects of his pious hate. It is not to be denied, that this strange man was endowed with a peculiar eloquence, which stirred the blood in his hearers' veins, like the infusion of some maddening drug. The brethren started from their seats; one cry of surprise burst from every lip. Even Calvin Wolfe, the theatrical manager of this scene, was surprised. At last, after a brilliant speech of half an hour, Malachi stated in short bold sentences, the great creed of the Holy Protestant League.

"Here is the Broad Platform on which we stand. We believe in the TOTAL DEPRAVITY of the human race. We believe, that from all Eternity, God has fore-ordained the SALVATION OF HIS ELECT, the condemnation of the wicked. We believe in the ETERNAL TORTURE OF THE WICKED, in a place of uncompromising and unextinguishable punishment. We believe in the Trinity of the Godhead. We believe that the POPE IS THE VICAR OF THE DEVIL, AND HIS FOLLOWERS WORSHIPPERS OF THE DEVIL. We believe that every man has a right to interpret the Scriptures, as to his own judgment shall seem best. Every man who believes these truths, as we do, shall be welcome to our ranks. In the name of God, we hail him as one of the Elect. *Every man who doubts these truths, or even one of them, is a Heretic and an Infidel, doomed to endure the eternal wrath of God!*"

"That is sound Gospel doctrine!" exclaimed the Rev. Dr. St. Blew, "You say truth Brother Malachi!"

"Sound Gospel doctrine! Truth, Brother Malachi!" echoed from all the brethren.

Brother Malachi turned his back toward the brethren, and confronted Wolfe, while a smile of demoniacal mockery overspread his face.

"I say my dear Brother, would'n't you like something warm to drink?" he whispered, with a hideous leer. Wolfe answered him with an ominous scowl, but Malachi, in no manner daunted, turned to the brethren again, with an expression of extreme sanctity: "Brother Wolfe whispers to me, that we had better take our seats, and discuss the details of our plan at leisure."

Soon the flaring light shone over the heads of the brethren, as seated in their arm-chairs, they bent over the table, examining with anxious eyes, the mass of papers spread out before them, while the low, deep whispers of Wolfe, alone disturbed the silence of the room.

An hour passed. The great plan of the Holy Protestant League, was perfected in all its details. The brethren were gone, and the Bank President, with his tool, stood alone in the council chamber.

"Come Malachi, off with this glossy broadcloth, away with this white cravat. Put on your rags once more. I have work for you to do. Come Sir: I have no time to wait. Put on your rags, and we will away to Kensington, and then to—Wolf-Eden!"

An expression of indefinable fear passed over Malachi's face, as he gazed upon the lowering brow of Wolfe.

"It cannot be, Wolfe," he falteringly exclaimed, "that you believe all this stuff about the Bible? Confess that you are acting the hypocrite! That you have no more respect than I have, for—excuse me, if I laugh—the Holy Protestant League?"

"Fool!" exclaimed Wolfe, with a look that made Malachi tremble in his shoes, "What can you know of the mysteries of grace? When Oliver Cromwell lay in the death-agony, deserted by his friends, and harrowed by the memories of his life, he called an aged Minister to his side. 'Dost thou believe'—faltered the dying Protector—that *the soul, once in grace is always in Grace? Dost thou believe that the Elect of God, can never fall into sin?*' 'I do!' was the answer, 'the Bible asserts it, our creed confirms it, our hearts know it for a holy truth!' 'Then,' said the stern warrior, pressing his chilled hand against his clammy brow, while his eye glared with fire, that Death itself could not dim, 'Then I die happy! For I know, that I am one of the elect of God!'"

"And you, Wolfe, and you—" faltered Malachi, gazing in awe upon the glowing countenance of this strange man, "Can never fall into sin? A crime, when committed by you, becomes a virtue? In fact——"

"I, I," exclaimed Wolfe, raising his glassy eyes, now gleaming with an emotion that was almost holy, toward heaven, "I AM ONE OF THE ELECT OF GOD!"

CHAPTER TWELFTH.

THE DEVIL'S GRAVE.

"STAND back gentlemen, stand back! Do you listen to me gentlemen of the Senate, and fellow-citizens of the House? Here—let me support my dignity against this lamp post. You can lean against the corner of that blue frame house. Is it a *blue* frame? That's a grave question for the committee on home affairs. Sil-en-ce! Harry Blair has the lamp post—attention!"

Grasping the lamp post with both hands, the tall young gentleman quivered to and fro, like a cornstalk in a gale. Now parting his long hair aside from his manly features, he cast a vacant glance along the darkness of the alley, and then clutching the lamp post with a firmer grasp turned to his companions.

Seven in number, various in height demeanour and appearance, they stood

ranged against the toppling wall of an old blue frame, their eyes rolling in convivial light, centred upon the form of their leader.

"Gentlemen," resumed Harry Blair, making a desperate plunge after one end of his handsome blue scarf, which in the excitement of the moment, had escaped from the confines of his white vest, "Here is the state of the case! Here we are, medical students, on our first winter in the Quaker City. Our studies have been arduous—I may say—intense! In the course of four months, we have passed successfully through a course of nineteen species, seventeen blow-outs, one hundred and twenty-one slightly convivia!—a-n-d—eh? Who shook this lamp post?"

"We!" thundered a stout little fellow, who looked like a pine knot with arms and legs attached, as he shook his clenched hand in the air, "we have carried on a brilliant campaign against two hogsheads of brandy and a wil-wilderness of champagne bottles!"

This interruption loosened the tongues of the rest of the party.

A tall thin student with long red hair, and sharp features, sprang into the centre of the pavement:

"Stand aside, Jimmy Nix! My name is Mackey? D'ye hear Mackey? Any gentleman that feels disposed for a friendly fight, with three bowie knives, or a rifle, will please favor me with a call! Or—I am not particular—" with a condescending bow and a drunken smile, "Would anybody like to stand breast to breast, and settle any little difficulties with three pair of nine barrelled revolvers?"

This friendly offer, made in the most polite tone imaginable, did not receive that decided attention which it merited, for the remaining portion of the students five in number, sprang out into the centre of the pavement, and began to shake their fists and shout their drunken ejaculations, until the dim old alley echoed again.

"My father owns half of Alabama," mumbled a colossal student, who gloried in the name of John Smith, "Why gentlemen, if he was just to take the pocket-money, which he gives his children to purchase marbles, he could buy you all in a lump, black your faces and sell you for Virginný niggers—the real stripe—and no mistake! My father's a very—ve-r-y——"

"My grandfather was a nobleman; every body knows the Walmsleys of Walmsley-Dell, 'old dominion'"—shouted a dogged gentleman with very short hair, square forehead and thick eyebrows: "There's my card, Augustus Walmsley at your service. You see my family derived their patent of nobility from—from—who was it? From—now I have it—from——"

—"The old nigger down the alley, who sells a cent's worth of liver on three plates—" unconsciously remarked a dapper little fellow, with slim waist and curly hair, as he inserted his cane between the bricks and danced around it, like a Hindoo fakir around his favorite god.

This unfortunate remark would have provoked a deadly fight, had not

the last two students, who round in face and portly in paunch, looked as much alike as two red-skinned pippins, commenced singing a melancholy ballad, in which the whole company joined. This ballad no less celebrated for the touching simplicity of its design, than for the harrowing interest of its plot, chronicled the mental agony of two brothers by the name of Darling.

"Now for the first verse!" shouted the fattest of the fat students, known by the name of Peter:

"John Darling he thought that his brother was dead—
And his brother he thought that John Darling was dead!"

"The second verse gentlemen," exclaimed the other corpulent student, entitled Timothy, "It is touching—painfully touching—

John Darling he thought that his brother was dead—
And—his brother he thought that John Darling was dead!"

"Gentlemen," cried John Smith, "I appeal to you all, if that verse is n't the same as the first!"

"Now for the chorus," ejaculated the corpulent Peter, "It's the chorus that contains the sad *denouement* of this tragedy—join it with a rush, my boys!—

John Darling he thought that his brother was dead—
And ——"

"No you don't!" howled John Smith, "No sir! You can't palm that off on me a third time. Gentlemen I appeal to you, are we to keep here all night, singing the same thing over and over? Is it honorable in any gentleman to ask it? Is it——"

"And——" chorused the students, "John Darling he thought that his brother was—dead!"

The scene was picturesque and peculiar

Harry Blair tall in form and manly in feature, attired in the height of fashion—a glossy black dress coat, white vest and blue scarf, pinned with a diamond and spotted with gold—clinging to the lamp post, which formed the centre of the picture. The seven students all dressed as if for an evening party with snowy vests, white kid gloves and handsome scarfs, tottering along the pavement, their arms intermingled, while they shouted in drunken chorus. The alley stretching away on either side, dusky and obscure with the thick mists of the evening, creeping over its narrow pathway and along its leaning roofs, while overhead in the narrow interval between the houses, a great dim red object shining lazily through the gloom, supplied the place of a moon. Altogether it was an effective picture of a convivial party, who

waandering into a dark alley make fools of themselves, break the peace and tempt the watchmen.

"Gentlemen," said Harry Blair, hugging the lamp post with one arm, while he gesticulated with the other, "You surprise me. Not only to interrupt your President, but to séduce him into singing ballads! Poland—" he continued in that peculiar confusion of thought, which treads in the foot-steps of the champagne bottle, "Poland never felt her chains till now! Where was I? Can you tell Peter? Oh—yes—have n't we left Elder Brown's party, in order to take a turn round the city? Have n't you entrusted yourselves to my care? Why have I led you into this dark alley? I will tell you. For five months gentlemen, I have been debarred from the great right of a Virginian. Bred in her free hills, it has ever been my peculiar privilege to go out on some calm morning, invoke the Goddess of Liberty, draw a long breath and—YELL! Yell I say, YELL! Does any gentleman of this honorable body, doubt the power of a double-breasted yell, to raise the spirits and cheer the metaphysical faculties? Well, I have brought you here to indulge in a social yell. A convivial howl. A broad-shouldered, double-breasted war-hoop."

Thus speaking Harry Blair placed himself carefully upright against the lamp post, and pressed his hands against his breast, as if in the act of drawing a deep breath.

"Now boys! For the honor of our country! Prepare to yell. Open mouths—draw breath—make ready—YELL!"

The sound that shook the dark alley, as the eight students combined their breath in one grand effort of uproar, resembled nothing so much as the rattling of a roll of sheet-iron, over an inclined plane of rocks, or the demoniac groans of a mob wailing mournfully at the door of a candidate for congress, who has been defeated by two votes.

"Now gentlemen, I feel easier. Fall in two by two, and let us march to that place of oriental magnificence, which delights this select neighborhood with doses of grog and fiddle, to wit, Columbiana Hall!"

It must be confessed, that the march which the students accomplished along the irregular pavement of that narrow alley, would have raised a blush on the valorous cheek of a volunteer captain, who leads his brave company in a forlorn hope against a pile of bricks, or a lime box. First came Harry Blair, staggering not so much along the narrow side-walk or against the curb, but all over the street, from the cellar doors of the battered houses on the right, to the closed window shutters on the left. Then the colossal student John Smith, walked lumberingly like a theatrical elephant rehearsing the Polka. Succeeding him, came the red-haired Mackey, staggering straight forward with enormous strides, as though he had been employed by the city surveyor to divide the street into certain distances, from two to three yards each. Walmsey of Walmsey-Dell, Old Dominion, not altogether unconscious of the dignity of his ancestors took very short steps,

making an unsuccessful effort to keep up an appearance of deep thought, by placing the fore finger of his right hand on the tip of his nose. The little man with the curly head, understood to be named Charles Morton, made various unsuccessful dives after the coat-tail of his predecessor. Meanwhile the pine knot, Jimmy Nix, the fat brothers Timothy and Peter walked promiscuously all through each other, singing various tunes in a breath, and swearing that they could die for one another, with divers vague allusions to one more bottle of champagne, Liberty or Death, and the Tariff of '42.

At last COLUMBIANA HALL was reached.

Do you fancy an elegant structure, with marble pillars in front, and lofty windows, blazing with festival light? Alas, that such a fancy, should prove but idle poetry after all!

An old blue frame house, with a low window, through whose small panes struggled a dim and sickly light, a narrow door, leaning forward, as though about to tumble its whole length in the gutter, the roof toppling to one side, the very boards of the front, having a drunken inclination to stagger toward the next house, such was that place of oriental magnificence, elevated by a bold stretch of fancy, into—COLUMBIANA HALL.

It stood in the centre of that dark alley of poverty and crime.

On either side extended a long prospect of miserable tenements, whose toppling doors and window frames, battered fronts, sashes stuffed with rags or straw, and roofs bending toward the sidewalk, almost within your reach, presented the details of a picture of utter misery and degradation.

From these miserable huts, on a summer day, you might see crawl forth into the sun, a swarm of uncouth shapes—not the forms of wild beasts, for they walked erect, nor yet the forms of human beings, for they were one mass of rags and sores, pollution and disease.

Creeping from the damp cellars, crawling from the narrow doors, staggering forth from the dens where maddening drugs were sold, these creatures would lay their loathsome shapes in the sunlight, along the curb, or over the sidewalk, clustering together in groups of wretchedness and squalor. White and black, young and old, man and woman, were mingled in the hideous prospect. Here an old creature—surely not a man?—with grey hairs, and a rag quivering over his narrow chest in the way of attire. By his side a bloated shape, swollen at the eyes, dark in hue, with loathsome tatters tied to his limbs; was this a Negro? Was ever slave so base as this? Then tottering along, with curses on their thin pinched lips, came little children, white and black together, almost naked, little children, maddened with draughts of fiery poison, howling the name of a God, they had never known. Was it of such as these the Saviour spoke, when he — but no! These are not children; they are the cubs of wild beasts; not the offspring of human flesh.

Like innumerable multitudes of grave-worms, feeding on the corruption in which they are born, these shapes of misery wound along the dark alley,

mingling together, until looking along the prospect of wretchedness you beheld nothing but a far spreading vista of rags and sores, blindness and misery, lameness, disease, starvation and crime.

In fact, of all the vile haunts which God's sun ever shone upon, in the compass of a large city, this was the vilest; of all the sights which ever drew tears of blood from a human heart, to look upon, here might be seen the foulest; of all the bestial shapes which ever shocked the eye, these were most beastly; for bearing some resemblance to humanity, they were yet in the scale of being far beneath the ape or dog.

These were the Heathens of the Quaker City, for whom a Christ had never died; the Lepers of Philadelphia, to whom Almighty God had never given a soul!

But the worst sight of all—compared to which disease was beautiful, and pollution divine,—broke on your eye, when you beheld a fair girl, yes, a woman, with the loveliness of her sex, about her still, reeling from the deep of poison, the bottle in her hand, while her kisses pressed the rank lips of some hideous beast in human shape. Could Almighty God have given her a Soul? Then why did not one of those noble missionaries, who travel twelve thousand miles to translate God's word into Chinese, or Sanscrit, only pause half an hour, ere he undertook his long journey, to walk twelve squares from Chesnut street, and translate the same word, into the language of the Heathens of the Quaker City?

This alley may have a pretty name in the Directory of the city, but in the dialect of the thieves, cut-throats and paupers who swarmed within its huts, it was known by this graphic designation—THE DEVIL'S LONG LANE. This low haunt, which the drunken fancy of the Student, elevated into a name soft and sweet enough for the pages of a Milliner's Magazine, was known by a short and appropriate title—THE DEVIL'S GRAVE.

With one drunken bound, the Students stumbled through the narrow door. A range of flaring tallow candles, stuck in porter bottles, illumined with a red and murky light, a small apartment, with low ceiling, tottering walls, and uncarpeted floor. Near the window, leaning over a rude plank, which placed across two barrels, and crowded with bottles, supplied the place of bar and counter, stood the Proprietor of the establishment, known by the sprightly designation of GRAVEYARD CROW. He was a man of some forty years of age, attired in suit of rusty black, with a yellowish white cravat and saffron shirt bosom. His face as flat and dingy as a flannel cake, was lighted by two large grey eyes, which starting from the wrinkled lids, glared upon you with a sinister expression. He stood, leaning over the plank, with bottles on either side, while his corpse-like eyes surveyed the details of his den.

All around the narrow walls, extended a bench of rough pine, which was crowded with the forms of men and women, some white, some black, some

blooming in a cankered youth, and some withered in a hopeless age. They muttered in their drunken sleep, as crowded together, like herrings in a barrel, with their various faces revealed by the dusky light, they attempted to realize the value of the copper coin, which had been paid to Mr. Crow, for their night's lodging.

In one corner, a black fiddler, very blind and very drunk, was nervously endeavoring to exorcise the soul of a departed tom-cat from his fiddle, for the sounds he produced, resembled nothing so much, as the desperate mi-aw of a mad Grimalkin.

In the opposite corner, two men with uncleanly faces and shirt bosoms of doubtful hue, were engaged in rattling a dice-box, while a stout countryman, in a red linsey coat and a white hat, stood wondering by.

Dancing to the unearthly music of the fiddler, a slender young man, with great streaks of dark hair, hanging down on the collar of a faded green coat, and a very subdued mustache, varying the blank-verse expression of a tallow-colored face, was performing various unknown figures along the floor, with movements of his arms and legs, that reminded you of the spasmodic contortions of an unhappy cat on a hot bake-iron.

This singular sight held the students spell-bound, as they entered the room. Piling along the wall, with Harry Blair at their head, they surveyed the agonies of the unknown gentleman in the green coat, with a stare of drunken wonder.

"Black Samuel," said Mr. Crow, with a mildness of voice and politeness of manner, that would have done honor to the drawing room of a Merchant Prince, "As this gentleman now owes you the sum of one penny, you will please suspend the music until he *'forks over.'*"

"Suspend the music!" shouted the decayed exquisite, throwing forward his right foot, which, viewed in connection with the leg, looked like a fifty pound weight tied to a broomstick. "Do you know me? I am Count Wilkimflimzey, S-a-r! A Virginian by Jove! The vulgar call me Beau Silkemsoftly, but I disown the appellation. What? D'ye think I'd cheat you out of a—penny? A sum so disgustingly small, that it gives me pain to mention it. Do you take me for an *outsider*? Do you think I want to *'ring in'*?"

Thus speaking, the Count took a tail of his green coat on each arm, and strode in offended majesty around the room.

"Landlord, eh-em!" he cried, pausing before the plank, "Just let me have a lee-tle o' that brandy, will you? I feel faintish. The Secretary of War's in town, and I have an appointment with him. We manage things together you know? A lee-tle, friend Crow, just a lee-tle? Eh? You wont; very well, S-a-r, you take me for an *outsider*, you think I want to *'ring in'*!"

"What do you mean by those classic phrases?" exclaimed Harry Blair, as he leaned against the plank.

"To be an *outsider S-a-r*, is to ~~sprung~~ ~~be~~ other people for a drink, in one word, to come the Giraffe over the 'Possum," replied the Count Wilkemsimsey, with great sauvity, "to *ring in*, is to come into a genteel saloon, like this, obtain various articles of eating and drinking on the handsomeness of your face, and then suddenly remember, that you have left your purse in your wife's reticule, and she has gone to the Dorcas society, to sew for the Poor, and won't be back till to-morrow. These are the definitions of those learned terms. By the bye, Mr.—eh? Jones I think you said, was your name? As I like your appearance, I will not object to take *that* drink!"

"Brandy, Crow! Brandy for the Count, by 'all means!" exclaimed Harry Blair, flinging half a dollar on the counter.

"Brandy," sententiously remarked the Count, as he raised a glass of dubiously colored poison to his lips, "Brandy is that mysterious liquid, which inserted into a man's mouth—as General Jackson perspicuously remarks in his Veto Message—plays the very deuce with his brains. Brandy!" he cried, with a sort of rapture, tossing the drug down his throat, "Show me a Mississippi of brandy and water and here's (*pointing to his mouth*), here's the Gulf of Mexico that will suck it in!"

Having proclaimed this geographical truth, the Count Wilkemsimsey introduced himself to the Students, with many kind enquiries after their families, calling them promiscuously by such peculiar names as Jones, or Smith, or Brown.

"Would you like to have a dance, gentlemen? Here's a musical performer who is related on his mother's side, to Ole Bulk. Would you like partners? Here's any amount of white and colored ladies, scattered on the benches yonder. What d'ye say? Shall we have a hoe-down?"

This proposition was received by the Students with a shout of laughter.

"A dance in the Devil's Grave!" shouted Harry Blair, surveying the white vests of the party, "With such refined ladies too! The idea is original! I say, dark man with one eye, can you play us a lively tune?"

"Something to put a steam engine in our heels?" exclaimed the Count, describing a spasmodic contortion on the floor, with the heels of his boots, which it may be as well to mention, were in a high state of seed.

"Yes—massah! Black Sam'el know how to please de gemmen!"

The one-eyed negro distended his mouth from ear to ear, and with one sweep of his bow, produced a sound which made their blood run cold.

A moment passed, and the light of the flaring tallow candles, revealed a singular scene.

Dragging the miserable women from their benches, the Students stood ranged along the floor, each with a partner by his side. The one-eyed fiddler produced certain shrill sounds of unearthly music; then the orgie commenced. White vests were mingled with rags, the forms of the young men, clad in glossy broadcloth, with shapes bloated by disease and hung with tatters. Here a frowsy colored lady, went whirling in the arm

of Harry Blair, there the colossal John Smith, bore a respectable rag picker through the mazes of the dance, while the one-eyed fiddler bent over his instrument, performing airs that were never heard on earth before.

The floor shook, the walls trembled, the two men who were playing dice for the amusement of the tall countryman, looked up and swore somewhat profusely; the sleepy occupants of the benches raised their heads, and gazed around with a wondering stare. All was heat, dust, uproar and confusion. In the midst of the scene, Count Wilkemflinsey danced indiscriminately on everybody's toes, raising his spirits with various unearthly shouts, calculated to scare any number of children into fits.

In fact, it was a melancholy proof of the debasing power of Alcohol, to behold this band of young men, who by their wealth and talent, were calculated to shine in any position of society, lowering themselves to the level of these human beasts, in the vilest den of the Quaker City.

When the disgusting orgie was at its highest pitch of uproar, Graveyard Crow, who had beheld the scene with a calm smile, like a good man, surveying the actions of the wicked, leaned gently over his plank, and exclaimed in a mild whisper—

“Mister Blair—I say Mister Blair!”

Harry Blair, maddened as he was by liquor, heard that deep whisper. Wiping the perspiration from his brow, he pushed his frowsy partner aside, and approached the counter. His manly face, with the long hair straggling over the cheeks, exhibited all the signs of violent intoxication. His eyes glared, his cheeks were flushed, his teeth clenched nervously together.

“What is it, Crow?” he muttered, making a pitch against the plank, which tumbled half a dozen bottles on the floor.

A strange smile stole over the face of the Keeper of this Den.

“Doctor, would you like to buy a subject?” he said, in a bland whisper. “You remember last winter, I sold some twenty dead bod—that is, subjects to your University. The lectures are over, but still, you young gentlemen are fond of trying your knives on a subject at all times—”

“A subject?” echoed Harry, “Have you one for sale?”

“That is to say, *she* is not dead yet, but I don't expect her to live more than three or four days. You remember *her*—that paleish girl, with the brown hair and hazel eyes, who interested you so much when you were here before, one night last winter?”

“What—dead in three or four days—that poor girl?” exclaimed Harry, touched, even in that hour of low debauchery, by some faint memory of the past. “Dying did you say? Where is she? Lead me to her—quick—”

“Consumption,” remarked the mild Mr. Crow. “A very bad case of galloping consumption, with brandy on top of it. She can't last more than three days. Give me twenty dollars, my dear Mister Blair, and I will secure the body for you.”

“I remember her!” muttered Harry, “A miserable pale-faced girl, whom

I saw last winter, herding with cut-throats and thieves, yet with the traces of a better life about her still."

Then the expression of pity which passed over his face, was succeeded by a wild and drunken glare. He flung a purse of silver on the board, while his eyes flashed with a maniac light.

"Mark you old Crow; I purchase her dead body! Where is she? Where shall I find my *subject*?"

"Through yonder narrow door, along a dark passage, into the private chamber of my establishment," mildly remarked Mr. Crow, as he pocketed the silver dollars.

Without a word, Harry dashed through the Students, performing their drunken orgie, opened the narrow door in the back part of the room, and disappeared.

Graveyard Crow gazed upon his form; in the moment when he stood in the obscure doorway, with a singular contortion of his yellow visage.

"Twenty dollars for a subject not yet dead," he muttered, "Fifty this morning for trapping a nigger runaway—forty last week, for hanging an unfortunate individual at Moyamensing—thirty, day before yesterday, for handing over to the police, those counterfeiters, who had taken refuge in my hotel. Not such an unprofitable vein of legal practice after all!"

Do not wonder at the elevated tone of this man's language. Admitted to the Philadelphia bar, as an attorney, this respectable gentleman had resigned the more refined obligations of the legal profession, for the laborious duties of thief-taker, body-snatcher, kidnapper and hangman. Yet it must be confessed that his superior education, shed a mild and softening light over his path, wherever he moved. Whether he trapped a pickpocket, sold a free negro into slavery, purloined a dead body, choked a convict for the Sheriff, or retailed a morsel of unclean meat and poisonous rum from his plank, he was still the same mild and persuasive Graveyard Crow.

He was rich withal; his name was beloved in all the banks; who might question the integrity or the honor of the wealthy Peter Crow.

As he stood smiling there, the orgie of the Students warmed into madness. Heated by the drunken dance, they flung their coats along the floor, and seized, each man of them, a bottle filled with that elegant compound of poison and ditchwater, called by a strong imagination, rum. Placing the degraded women, white and black together, in the centre of the room, they whirled around that circle of rage and disease, clattering their bottles with a jovial sound.

As the one-eyed fiddler, overcome by strong potations, had sunken on the floor, clutching his fiddle as a drowning man grasps a straw, it devolved upon the Count Wilkemsflimsey to supply the music of the scene. This he accomplished by beating a merry march against the floor and walls and ceiling, his musical instruments two enormous bottles, while an occasional variation upon the counter, with his feet, kept up the excitement of the revel.

"Go it!" screamed the Count, "This is what I call doing it, upon the high pressure system! Nine steam engines comin' down the Inclined Plane with the ropes cut, could n't beat this!"

"Ladies your healths!" cried the stout John Smith, whose enormous form towered above all the others, as with his throat bared and face flushed with drunkenness, he tumbled along in the dance. "Excuse me ladies, if I'm the least bit in liquor. My father's the richest man in Ala——"

"Anybody like to fight with a revolver? W-h-o-o-p!"

"There's good blood in our family, the Walmsey's of Walm——who jerked that elbow in my eye?"

"John Darling he thought that his brother was dead, and——"

"Liberty or death! Here's for the Tariff of '42. One bottle more! Hal-lo-o!"

Routed by the shouts and yells of the revellers, the sleepy occupants of the benches began to raise their heads, and gaze in drunken wonder on the scene. Among the faces which appeared in that wilderness of rags, you might trace the yellow visages of two mulattoes, whose muscular forms were fitted for any deed of daring, any act of outrage. With their half-curling hair thrown over their brows in shaggy masses, they looked like savage beasts preparing to spring on their prey. Their eyes did not rest for a single instant on the same point, but glared nervously from side to side, as though in search of some object of terror.

"I say, Jake," said one, seeking for a knife among his rags, "Don' you think dem kidnappers dar?"—he pointed to the dancers as he spoke.

"Don' know Bill," replied the other, also seeking for his knife, "But dere was a darkey stole away this mornin'. I 'spect Graveyard Crow yander. Let's keep a look out!"

These were runaway negroes from the south, who had as lief eat a breakfast at any time as cut a throat, but sooner hack the hearts out of their bodies, than be taken to their masters as slaves again.

At this moment the street door opened; a tall form advanced to the counter, and the light flashed over the commanding features of PAUL MOUNT-LAUREL. Crow greeted him with a low and obsequious bow.

"Blair—where is he?" was the deep-whispered question of Mount-Laurel.

Crow pointed to the door, and ere a moment had flown, this singular man—who an hour ago stood at the altar beside his fair young bride—plunged through the dancers, and followed the footsteps of Harry Blair.

Quivering with rage the tallest mulatto sprang to his feet: "Dat's de kidnapper!" he shouted in a voice of thunder, "Niggers—I say—do you hear—dere's kidnappers among us!"

"Kidnappers!" yelled the other mulatto, drawing a long and glittering knife from his rags. "Niggers—I say—kidnappers!"

At that terrible word, up from the benches where they were coiled like

snakes in a swamp, started the forms of some twenty negroes, aroused all at once from drunken slumber into demoniac passion.

"Kidnappers!" the room echoed with the hoarse shout, and twenty knives glittered in the light.

That sound held the students spell-bound, even as they sprang forward in the mad orgie of their dance. They had heard that sound before, the yell of a Negro when driven frantic by infernal instincts; with one movement they started backward toward the door, gazing with half-sobered glances upon the dark forms which gloomed before them, with uplifted knives and rolling eyes.

At this moment the street door opened once more, and a form calmly advanced into the open space, which lay between the negroes and the students. In that manly figure clad in the blue uniform with the shawl bound over his breast, you recognize the Indian, YONAWAGA.

The students hailed him with a shout of joy, the mulattoes with a brutal yell.

Meanwhile urging his staggering footsteps along a dark narrow passage, Harry Blair came to a stairway, which he descended. His brain fired by one of those wild delusions which in the hour of drunken revelry, impel a man to almost any extravagance or crime, he hurried on. Down ten miserable steps that creaked beneath his tread, and some faint beams of light stole through the apertures of a door along the darkness of the passage.

The sound of voices struck his ear; crouching in the dark he intently listened.

"It is her voice! The voice of the living subject, whom I have just purchased for twenty dollars!"

With one mad plunge he pushed the door before him; the hinges creaked; it fell with a deafening sound, and a volume of light streamed out along the passage and the stairway.

In order to comprehend the strange sight which in that moment burst upon the student's eyes, let us retrace our steps and behold a scene which took place in this dim retreat of the Devil's grave, not an hour ago.

In a large and spacious room, whose walls were lost in darkness while the centre was illuminated by a strong light, around a rough pine table sat four persons, engaged in low-whispered discourse. A small brass lamp that emitted a red flame and dark smoke stood in the centre of the table, amid a circle of bottles and cans, its light pouring full in the faces of these men, while at their back all was darkness.

A noxious damp pervaded that subterranean apartment. All was dark beyond the table, yet even there huddled in groups along the wall, you might discern the outlines of human figures men and women, laid prostrate in a miserable and drunken sleep. Ever and again a muttered oath, rung

from the foul lips of one of the sleepers broke on the air, or you might hear them tossing in their uneasy slumber.

As your eyes became more accustomed to the gloom of the place, you might observe that the wide and uneven floor of that tainted place was crowded all around the table by sleeping figures, whose rags and wretchedness were buried in twilight darkness.

Three of the men who sat around the table, had evidently been roused from their miserable slumber in this cellar of the Devil's Grave, while the fourth by his aspect, immeasurably superior to the wretches who herded in this den, was a stranger to the place.

There was a wild dashing beauty in his appearance. His hair and beard curling in thick masses, and mingling together like the flakes of a lion's mane, made his head seem unnaturally large, even for his tall and muscular frame. In the centre of the mass of dark curls appeared his face, bronzed by exposure to a tropical sun, and stamped with an expression of reckless daring. The brow was white and prominent, the nose long and straight, the cheek-bones high, the lips somewhat free and sensual in their deep red hue, the dark eyes now kindling with scorn, or again rolling in careless merriment.

His dress was no less singular than his face. It was rich, showy, dashing. A dress coat of the finest black cloth, enveloped his broad shoulders. A black scarf wound in negligent folds over his massive chest, while a vest of dark cloth displayed the outlines of his waist. Had he started to his feet you would have beheld his dark pantaloons gathered tightly to his middle, and falling in wide folds around small boots whose dark morocco revealed the shape of light and agile feet. This attire alone, might have been called plain and subdued, were it not for other details of the gentleman's appearance. His broad chest was loaded with chains of massy gold, which wound along his scarf, and fell in many circles over his dark vest. A diamond of dazzling lustre, shone in the centre of that glittering mass of gold. His fingers—small quivering and delicate, though embrowned by a southern sun—were loaded with costly rings. Even the button which loosely confined his wide shirt collar, around his finely-shaped and muscular throat, was a gem of clear deep lustre.

Gazing upon that singular man, you would have been puzzled to define his profession, or his position in society, although it was evident he bore about him in the shape of mere ornaments, a moderate fortune.

In this den where he had appeared the night before, a strange and unexpected visitor, he was known only by the short and singular cognomen **BLACK LARRY**.

The other three figures presented a strange contrast to this handsome and dashing figure. Let us sketch their miserable outlines in a word.

The figure on the right, a youth not more than nineteen years of age in reality, but in appearance ten years older, was tall muscular and well-

formed, but his blue eye was haggard, his sunken cheek pale and livid, his compressed lips set together with an expression of reckless defiance. He was clad in a coarse grey roundabout and pantaloons; the uniform of the Eastern Penitentiary. In one word he was a DISCHARGED CONVICT.

The man opposite with a beetling brow, small sunken eyes and wide mouth, was dressed in a coarse overcoat of brown cloth, buttoned to the throat. His countenance settled in its expression of determined courage, exhibited the ravages of precocious vice. A mere boy in years, he was already venerable in crime.

The third a miserable wretch, slender in form with a sickly face and hollow eyes, also a youth of some nineteen, with the marks of suffering and wrong stamped on his wasted face, was attired in the loathsome rags of a PAUPER from the Blockley Almshouse.

"You have done my bidding?" said Black Larry, "You have summoned them *all*—ALL from the dens and alleys of the city, who may not have passed the age of seventeen, to meet me at the *appointed place*, an hour after midnight?"

"We have," said the convict, "Every dog, as miserable and wretched as ourselves, who may skulk in the hidin' places of the city, has received our summons! At one o'clock to-night they 'll meet you *there*!"

"You told them that I had gold? That I could make their fortunes?"

"Did n't we?" growled the man with the overcoat buttoned to his throat; "You need n't fear, but they 'll be ready for any deed you please. Murder is a frolic to sich fellers, mind I tell you!"

"What a lot of 'em there 'll be!" chuckled the pauper, with a sickly consumptive laugh, "Sich rags and tatters as will meet you to-night—Oh, my! What a nice party it 'ill be to be sure!"

"The thing becomes interesting!" exclaimed Black Larry, rubbing his hands. "I want about forty desperate fellows, who don't care for man nor devil, who will do what I bid them though a throat is to be sliced, or a house to be burnt! I tell my boys I have gold—nay, do not look so fondly at this purse, as though you would murder me to grasp it—I have gold, and *pistols* also, my good fellows! There take the purse and share the doubloons!"

He flung the glittering contents of the purse upon the table. With one movement, the three started from their seats, and clutched the doubloons with an eager grasp. For a moment they looked fiercely in each other's faces, as though about to quarrel for the prize, but the voice of Black Larry silenced all dispute.

"Five pieces to each of you! By the Gold Coast, d'ye hear? Or shall I have to use my knife? If you wish to enlist under my command, you must learn to obey me. Share the gold, I say, and drop into your seats!"

His dark eyes were fixed upon their faces. With a sullen murmur they divided the gold, and sank back into their seats.

"Come, my good fellows, as we are to have some jovial times together, I would like to converse our acquaintance by knowing your names?"

A smile of scorn passed over the convict's wasted face.

"I had a name *once*," he said, "But I lost it in the Penitentiary. They gave me a new name there; one that suits me well! They christened me by the number of my room, so you will please call me NUMBER TEN, if it aint too much trouble!"

"A reckless dog!" muttered Black Larry, "the very kind of dare-devil I want."

"As for me," exclaimed the man with the beetling brow, baring his right arm, "Do you see the mark branded on my wrist? They scorched it into me, down south, for hiring a nigger to kill his master. A *capital* —eh? You may call me RED BRAND, if it don't hurt your feelin's!"

"Another dog of the same kidney," muttered the dashing Larry—"And you, my fellow!"

"Me? I never had no name," cried the Pauper, with a grin, "My parents was poor folks, who couldn't afford to gi' me one. When I was a little shaver, the boys called me Dirty Bob, but since I grow'd up, the Mayor always sends me to the almshouse, permiscuously, by the name of Jones or Smith. Suppose you call me RAGS for short?"

"But come Mister," interrupted Red Brand, "You haint told your name. Where do you come from, and where do you go? Was you ever in this city afore?"

"By the Gold Coast, that is my secret!" laughed Black Larry, passing his diamonded hand over his forehead—"Yes, I have been here three times before, once in 1831, once in 1836, once in 1843!"

Red Brand took a hearty draught from the black bottle, filled with poison and rum, in equal quantities

"Spose you tell us about them three times?"

"Yes, I will tell it to them!" he muttered, "it will look like a proof of confidence, and bind them to me by rivets of steel! Come, boys, take another pull at the brandy—here's segars, the prime article from Havanna; I know it, for I brought—well, well, smoke away and listen!"

Then he began a story, which in its strange and peculiar details, was well adapted to melt even these hearts of stone, into tears.

"Well I remember it! On Christmas night, 1831, a Mother, a mild, pale-faced woman, sat in a small room in Water street, waiting for the return of her husband. He was a drayman, in the employ of a rich merchant. Her little boy, a dark-haired child of some seven years, crouched at her feet, resting his head upon her lap. Every now and then, he raised his head, murmuring the name of his father. Time passed, the supper things were cold: the poor Drayman did not come. At last the boy—gathering his little sister, who lay sleeping in one corner, to his arms, began to cry

with impatience, the door opened, and the Husband appeared, borne on the shoulders of four men, with his skull crushed to pieces."

Black Larry wiped a tear from his eye. Number Ten cursed the brandy, for being so sharp; it made his eyes water.

"He had been crushed by the falling of a sugar hogshead, The wife was a widow, the little boy and his sister orphans.

"The next day—well do I remember it!—that mother took her boy by the hand, and led him into the darkened chamber of a dying man. A light stood by the bedside, casting its red glow over the visage of a man some eighty years of age. He lay there, picking at the coverlid, while his dark visage, lighted only by a single eye, worked with the contortions of pain. Yes, one eye was sightless, while the other glared with the fire of approaching death.

"This was the Merchant, in whose service the drayman had been killed.

"As the Mother and the Boy approached, the old man raised his head

"'Come here, woman,' he faintly said, in broken accents; 'your husband died in my service. I will provide for his son. I will not give him money, for that would be stolen from him. But I will give him that which no human hand can tear from him—an EDUCATION.'

"The Mother would have poured forth her thanks, but the old man stilled her with a peevish ejaculation.

"'Pshaw! D'ye think that I've any time to waste in words! Take this parchment; suspend it to the neck of your son by a ribbon. In six years my College for Orphans will be finished. Let your boy go to the man, whose name is written on the parchment, and in my name demand an education. That is a codicil to my will: in it, I obviate all objections, which may be made six years hence, to the age of your son. Good bye. Leave me. I want to die!'

"Thus speaking, the old man laid his hand upon the orphan's head, muttered some words in a foreign tongue, and then turned his face to the wall. Never has the memory of that grim one-eyed face, smiling kindly, even in the hour of death, passed from my heart! By the Gold Coast, I shall make a baby of myself, for now, even now, I seem to feel that old man's touch upon my head!

"As I left the room, I saw three other parchments, similar to the one I bore around my neck, laid on a small table by the bedside of the dying man.

Larry paused; his face was agitated with strong emotion.

"Mother and sister are now gone—laid in the grave like old Stephen Girard, but still I bear his parchment over my heart!"

He tore the scarf loaded with chains, aside from his chest, and drew the parchment forth from its resting place over his heart. Unloosing the chain which bound it, he held it over the table, while his hair fell over his face, its thick curling masses concealing the emotion which softened that sunburnt countenance. Still holding the parchment in his hands, he was

ashamed to raise his face, lest the sneering eyes of his criminal companions should witness his agitation.

"It has been with me, over twelve thousand miles of sea," he gasped, in a choking voice, "Over ten thousand miles of land—in scenes of blood, danger, woe that the tongue of man cannot picture, that parchment has been warmed by each pulsation of my heart!"

He raised his head, and uttered a cry of surprise. So far from sneering at this exhibition of emotion, the three miserable wretches seemed touched with an agitation deeper and stranger than his own.

Red Brand sat like a block of stone, his eyes streaming hot and scalding tears; Number Ten sunk his finger nails in his cheek, in the effort to stifle the sobs that shook his bosom; Rags flung his forehead on the table, his whole frame shaking like a dry leaf tossed in the winter storm.

What strange chord had been touched in the hearts of these rude men?

Amazed at the sight, Black Larry let his parchment drop upon the table.

Without a word, each of the three produced from his miserable attire, a similar parchment, which had been confined to his throat, by a much-worn and faded ribbon.

The three parchments lay there in the centre of the table, each bearing in the handwriting of Stephen Girard, the name of—CALVIN WOLFE.

"What do I see?" exclaimed Black Larry, tossing his thick curls aside from his brow—"Three parchments like mine—"

"Yo' see feller," said Red Brand, in a husky voice, "I'm not so bad as to forgit my poor mother's memory. Even a murderer has his feelin's. An' when you talk about that old man, Stephen Girard, I remember what my poor mother said afore she died, and ——"

"My father was a carpenter in his employ; he was killed by a fall from a house," said Rags, "He giv' that paper to my mother for me ——"

"And mine a sailor, in command of one of his ships; he was lost at sea. That parchment, old Stephen giv' to me, in my mother's sight, the day afore he died!"

"Soh—we are all in the same position!" said Larry, with a meaning smile, "You will fight so much the better, now my fellows, when you know that the object for which I assemble you, is —— but I will speak of that after a while! Let me proceed with my story.

"One dark winter night, in the year 1836, a poor boy stumbled along amid the heaps of snow, which drifted across the streets, and halted at the door of *this man*——" placing his finger on the name which the parchment bore—"He had left his mother and sister in Baltimore, and journeyed on foot to Philadelphia, in the winter's cold and snow, to see this man, named by the last breath of Stephen Girard. He had come to claim his education in the college. At first, the servant thrust him from the door, but at last he saw the Bank President; trembling with cold, he sat down in the centre of the parlor, and produced the parchment from his breast. He read it—

looked at the half-naked boy and laughed. "My little fellow, you have come on a fool's errand. This college—which that old Girard directed to be built, will not be finished for twenty years. Go to your Mother, my good boy. Tell her to put you to school. There's the door. Good night!"

"Afore my mother died," said the Pauper, "She tuk me to his house, and he ordered the servant to trundle us from the step!"

"When I showed him my parchment—I was a poor innocent boy then—he threatened me with the workhouse—" said Red Brand, grinding his teeth together.

"And as for me—" a cold smile was on the Convict's face, "He not only kicked me from the door, but, when driven mad by starvation, I committed a robbery, he was the witness against me, he, Calvin Wolfe; on his evidence, I was sentenced to the Eastern Penitentiary. By — I got my education thar, and no mistake!"

Black Larry shaded his dark eyes with his uplifted hands, and gazed long and earnestly in the faces of these depraved wretches.

"I haven't got much Gospel learning," he muttered, "But it don't require much knowledge to settle this question. Had these fellows been educated according to the Will of the old man, where would they be now? In the cellar of a miserable grog-shop, clad in the dress of paupers and thieves? Had they been offered only a *chance*, for a fair start in life, would they have sunk as low as this? And as for me, why—why—well it don't matter. The blood that's on my hands, is holy in the sight of God, compared to the actions of these Plunderers of Stephen Girard's Orphans.

"Come, fellows; conceal these parchments. They will be of use to you, some day."

Then in a calm voice he resumed his story.

"In 1843—only last year—I came to Philadelphia again. In the dashing fellow, who covered with gold and diamonds, strutted Chusnut street, who could recognize the miserable orphan boy of 1836? I took rooms at the United States Hotel—drove my carriage and four—went by the name of Captain Balzadine of Havanna! Invited to the Wistar parties of the aristocracy, caressed by the ladies, beloved by the bankers, I flatter myself that I did the 'Distinguished Foreigner,' in the handsomest style!"

"How did you do it?" dryly remarked Red Brand, "I should like to be put in sich a line of business myself!"

"That's the secret, my dear fellow. But one thing troubled me. I had been—God knows where—for many years. My Mother's grave I saw in the Catholic churchyard in Baltimore. But my sister Alice, whom I had left a blooming child, with hazel eyes and auburn hair? Where was she? Dead? Or perhaps living in some haunt of poverty, or it may be—that thought made my blood run cold—sunk into some miserable den of shame. With these thoughts covering my soul in gloom, I strode one evening about dark, along Second street, below Chesnut. I looked through the panes of

a milliner's window, and beheld a young girl sitting behind the counter, with an unfinished bonnet in her hands.

"There was something very pretty in the sight. She was plainly clad, but her form was round and womanly. Rich tresses of hair hung along her peach-like cheeks; her eyes were softened by a tender glance. I looked upon her sadly and long, and as I looked, my heart leapt to my throat. It was ALICE—my sister—toiling there for perhaps a shilling a day, and I would make her rich! How the blood danced through my veins!

"In an instant I rushed into the store; Alice beheld me and started with a shriek. She did not recognize her brother, in the bearded stranger, who stood before her, with every lineament quivering with emotion. I seized her hand, wrung it to my heart, and flung a purse of gold in her lap. Then—ere she could look around—I was gone! I have not seen her since."

"What Mister," said Rags, "Did'nt yo' make yerself known to yer own sister?"

"Make myself known? Why should I? To tell her the means by which I had gained this gold? To lay bare to her innocent soul the secrets of my bosom? Sooner would I have cut my right arm from my shoulder!—Soon after this scene, I left the city. Poor Alice, where is she now! Dead? Perhaps married, with a baby on her bosom; married to some greasy merchant, with a red nose and a round corporation—Faugh!—But come, my fellows; we have plenty of time before one o'clock; pass the brandy this way; let us dismiss all thought, and soh—here's hurrah for a spree in the Devil's Grave!"

"That's the idea-r!" cried Rags, rubbing the tip of his nose, with glee. "Pass the Brandy this way—"

"And segars, don't forgit the segars!" exclaimed Number Ten, "Turbaecy's a fillysoffer, is turbaecy!"

"And women too!" shouted Red Brand, "Let's rouse up some of these jades in the corner there, and make 'em join the party! Here goes for a partner anyhow!"

As the ruffian rose from his seat, and stumbled into a dark corner, Black Larry lighted his segar, and turned his face to an opposite side of the cellar.

"Salubrious apartment this," he said, as the circles of smoke floated over his head. "Comfortable quarter for a new-married couple, in want of furnished lodgings!"

Meanwhile Red Brand approached the light again, dragging a miserable female along the floor by the arms. But half-roused from her drunken sleep, she muttered some incoherent words as he pulled her along, and faintly endeavored to tear herself from his grasp.

"Come you jade, no foolin', or I'll cuff you as I did yesterday," growled the ruffian, as he placed her erect against the table. The poor wretch, whose form swollen with disease, was clad in tatters, while her face, bloated with alcohol, was encircled by masses of tangled hair, soiled with the dust of the

floor, was either too weak to stand, or her senses were yet confused by her drunken slumber, for she fell backward, and lay with her whole length on the table.

"Brandy!" she faintly murmured, "Brandy!"

Black Larry, who had been gazing into the opposite corners of the room, turned and beheld her. The light—standing beside her head—fell over her bloated countenance, around whose outlines, the traces of loveliness and beauty, seemed even yet to linger. Larry arose, with his curiosity excited by the appearance of this miserable woman. He cast one glance over her form, with the white bosom, white even yet, though foul hands had beaten it in a drunken frenzy, appearing in the light from the garment of tatters, while the naked feet, swollen by consumption, were thrust from the skirts, like the feet of a corse. Black Larry bent slowly down, his curling beard touching her face, as he surveyed her with a long and careful glance.

"Brandy—I burn—I burn—brandy!" muttered the miserable woman. She unclosed her eyes.

Black Larry raised his head. The Convict saw him tremble; the Murderer noticed that his face had grown very pale; the Pauper wondered why his lips quivered so tremulously. Stretching forth his hands, as if so save himself from a fall over some dizzy height, that man stood there for a moment, and then sank back into the chair.

"ALICE!" he murmured in a whisper, that froze their blood.

The vagabonds gazed upon his livid face with a look of surprise. "What! You don't mean to say? Not *that* thing!" cried Red Brand starting backward, with the brandy bottle in his hand.

"My sister!" said Black Larry in a hoarse whisper, as he wiped the cold sweat from his brow.

The miserable girl moved on the table, and clutched at its rough boards with her quivering hands:

"I burn—I burn! Brandy—why will you not give me—Brandy?"

Black Larry silently arose. Bending down his head, he shaded his features from the light with his upraised hand, and gazed upon her face. The vagabonds could not mark the writhings of his countenance, but even in that dim light they beheld his muscular form quiver as with the first touch of some deathly disease. The hand which shaded his eyes trembled with a short, quick, nervous motion.

All was silent. The criminals regarded his speechless emotion with a mute reverence, that said more for their rude sympathy with his death-like agony, than all the eloquence of words that ever flowed from the lips of some great orator.

"Alice——" he murmured in a whisper scarcely audible, yet wrung syllable by syllable from his writhing heart—"Alice—don't you know me? I am your brother, Alice, your own brother! I am come back from all my wanderings to make you happy—rich and happy! I am a rough man,

Alice—I have done many deeds that would not bear the light—but still on ship-board and on shore, in all my thoughts I have remembered you, Alice, you! And often said to myself, soon I will return to her—give over this life of danger and crime—soon—— Yes, I said it Alice! Soon I will sit down by her side in some snug little home, pour the red gold in her lap and take her hands in my own, and talk of our dead mother!”

The eyelids of that bloated face slowly unclosed. Those eyes were lifted to his face. The veins of the white enamel filled with injected blood, the lids purpled and swollen, there was yet a soft expression lingering in the wild glare of her eyes, like the faint ray of a lamp, mingling in the red light of a conflagration.

“Alice—Alice”—groaned his choking voice—“You know me? My sister you know me?”

“Brandy!” muttered the wretched girl, rolling her vacant eyes along his face—“I am burning to death, here—in my bosom—and you will not give me brandy!”

“She does not know me!” burst in one hollow groan from his lips, and—while the vagabonds stood stricken into stone by the sight—he fell in the chair with his face buried in his hands, and his long dark locks resting on the table, within an inch of his sister’s matted hair.

The eyes of Evil Angels, looking from the Invisible World, have seen many sights of agony on this dark earth, but never did their gaze rest on a sight more terrible than this.

That wretched girl with the bloated face and rolling eyes, the bosom clad in tatters, and the bare feet projecting in swollen deformity, laid in the centre of the table, while a bowed head covered with thick and glossy curls was resting near her own, and the three criminals starting from their seats, with a rough sympathy on their brutal features, stood horror-stricken by the scene.—

That wretched girl was a thing of sale, on whose swollen tips any ruffian might press his kiss—these criminals, all, had shared her loathsome love—and yet she was a SISTER, and yet this man with the bowed head and writhing bosom was her BROTHER!

There was silence for a few moments, and then a voice rang from the darkness of the cellar.

“Give way there! I tell you she is mine, mine, for I have bought her dead body, with twenty dollars!”

Flushed in every feature with excitement, his eyes glaring with drunken madness, his clenched teeth laid bare by his lips which parted in a convulsive smile, Harry Blair staggered up to the table, and clasped the hand of the prostrate girl within his own.

“I say Mister in the vite west, what do yo’ want? Hey?” cried Red Brand, as a scowl darkened over his beetling brow, “Jist tech that gal, will yo’? Jist tech her, and see what a pelt under the jaw I’ll give you!”

"Give it to him!" muttered Rags; while Number Ten clenched his hands.

"Touch her?" shouted Harry Blair, who had lost all control over his mad fancies, "Touch her? Of course I will! And cut her up too, when she is dead. For I've bought her, my boys, bought her with twenty dollars!"

"Brandy—I burn!" muttered the insensible girl.

"Oh—ho! A severe case of inflammation on the lungs," muttered Harry staggering to and fro, "You want something to deaden that cursed burning. Not brandy, my darling, but opium; opium my dear!"

He drew a small phial from the side pocket of his dress coat, and held it to her lips. The girl clenched the neck of the phial between her teeth, and drank its contents with one eager draught.

"Enough to kill a healthy person, but in your case my dear, it will put out the fire in your breast, and kindle such fire in your veins that you'll see such sights, and hear such sounds—Jove! I should n't wonder if you should fancy yourself an Angel in a white apron, with red ribbons in your hair!"

As he uttered this remarkable conceit with a drunken smile, the girl started into a sitting posture, clapped her hands and uttered a long hollow sound of laughter. A strange frenzy flashed from her eyes, and crimsoned her faded countenance.

That fearful laugh roused her brother from the stupor into which he had fallen. He raised his face, whose pale hue was rendered even yet more livid, by the contrast of his dark beard and hair.

Black Larry gazed in the student's countenance, with a quick glance of surprise.

"Well—what do you want?" he said in that short hurried manner which betokened danger.

"Nothing, my dear fellow, nothing but this girl," cried Harry Blair, "You see I bought her body. She'll be dead in three days. An extraordinary subject, sir——"

He darted forward, and pushing the Pauper Rags aside, seized the girl's hands, and swayed them to and fro.

"Come, my jolly lass, step out and let's have a dance!"

"Yes!" cried the miserable woman, whose intellect aroused into strange life by the opium, now wandered among long-forgotten scenes, "Yes! We will pray to God, Mother, and wait for him! No bread in the house, no fire on the hearth, but he will come, Larry will come at last, and bring you stores of Gold! You are dying, Mother—ah, that cough—let me gather my shawl over your neck—nay, nay don't resist me! I can go to my work without it. It's not cold in the streets, no, no, it's quite a summer day! And then when I'm sitting at my work, earning a little to gain us bread, who knows Mother? May not the door open, and Larry! Oh, I am sure of it—Larry will come!"

And with her blood-shot eyes glaring with strange light, she passed her hands over the student's brow, and muttered, "Larry, why did you stay so long? Mother was dead and buried—the gold that a dark man flung in my lap one night, was stolen—winter came on, I was poor, and had no friends. One cold night, I sat in my miserable home, drawing the ragged cloak closer to my bosom. He appeared—yes, he offered me wealth, a home, if I would wed him. I was so poor, so cold, so miserable I could not refuse. In that wretched room, we were—married! Married! Oh, Larry, why did you stay so long?"

"Come girl, let's have a dance. Devil take this Larry!"

With one bound Black Larry sprang over the table, felled the student to the floor, and seized his sister's hands, looking madly in her face as he whispered:

"You were married. That was right; well, Alice, he died, your husband. You were left alone in the world. You then—O, God! I've seen men die, with their arms torn off at the shoulder, and yet they did not suffer what I do now—you then——"

"I was married," she said, with an accent of despair, that quivered through her brother's heart, like a bolt of ice, "And not married. He had a wife living. He tore from me all that makes a woman holy, even though she is clad in rags. He thrust me forth into the streets, and——"

"Alice, do tell me this good man's name!" whispered the Brother, laying her matted hair aside from her cold brow.

"I starved on for three days, in the streets, without a home. Sunday came; I was very hungry, very cold, indeed I did not know what I was doing, for I wandered into a large church, crowded with people. Some knelt before an altar tasting bread and wine. One man handed the cup from lip to lip. It was my Husband. I—you see, I was mad Larry—I started forward, called him by name, clutched him by the arm. I only remember that the Communion Cup fell from his hand, and I was dragged out by violent arms, and shut up in a dark place, where I remained—— Oh, Larry, why did you stay so long!"

"Look here Cap'in, I hired a nigger to murder his master," growled Red Brand, in a rough way, "But that was for money. If you'll jist tell me the name o' th' man, who did all this, to the gal here, I'll not eat or drink till I cut his heart out!"

And Rags moved up to one side and took the hand of the Murderer, while Number Ten took his place by the other side.

"Jist put me down in that party, will you?" said the Convict, in a hoarse voice.

"Alice, you see us all waitin' here? We only want to know the man's name?"

He bent forward and looked into her bloated face, now flushed along the cheeks and glaring in the blood-shot eyes.

An answer seemed to tremble on the girl's lips, when a hand was laid on Larry's shoulder, and Harry Blair, quivering with rage, stood by his side.

"Look here, fellow, I'm from Virginia. A gentleman may get drunk, but he never takes a blow. Do you understand? Have you a knife?"

"Pshaw! I've dealt with slave-masters and slaves, too long, to be frightened by a boy. Will you take your hand from my shoulder, or shall I plant my fist in your forehead again?"

The madness of intoxication was now changed into the frenzy of rage. Stung to the quick by the sneering tone of Black Larry, the Student drew a bowie knife from his white vest, and struck with an upward motion, under the left arm of his antagonist. The aim was fatal, the blow deadly, but in the very moment when the point pierced his vest, Black Larry caught the Student's wrist, and clutched it in his iron grasp, until the fingers slowly relaxed their hold, and the knife fell on the table.

Harry Blair was in the power of this man, whose dark eyes glared with anger and revenge. Bent back against the table, his throat enclosed by a grasp that nearly strangled him, he beheld his own knife gleaming above his face, while that countenance, framed in flowing beard and hair, glowered fiercely over him.

The three vagabonds drew nigh, their fingers quivering, as though they were anxious to share in the conflict.

Still Black Larry glared in the face of the Student, while his fingers tightened around his throat.

At this moment, as if to impart a grotesque horror to the scene, the wretched Alice, with the last dregs of her life warmed into action, by the opium, seized the lamp and started erect upon the table, dancing on tip-toe, with its red beams pouring down over her bloated face and matted hair.

"Hurrah!" she shouted, "Mother has come from her grave, to-night, and we'll dance together!"

"Now, you *brave* Virginian, shall I choke you to death or cut your throat?" And Larry bent down, and passed the edge of the knife along the Student's throat. "Ah—you shiver, you groan, you ——"

"Defy you to the last!" hissed from the lips of Harry Blair, as his eye began to start from his blackening face.

He raised the knife, clutching the hilt for a firmer grasp; Harry Blair tried to close his eyes, but still starting from the sockets they glared upon the uplifted blade; the vagabonds stood around, gazing upon the scene with hushed breath, the arm descended, winged with all the vigor of a fatal rage, and the keen point sank two inches deep into—the heart of the Student!

No! Turned aside by an unseen hand, it passed between his arm and breast, it sank two inches deep into the table. With an oath on his lips, Larry relaxed his grasp, and turned to strike the convict, who had dared to frustrate his vengeance.

He turned, and by the light of the lamp which the crazed girl dancing on

the table held above her head, beheld the form of a tall and noble-looking Stranger, who, attired in a dark dress coat, with a white vest, stood there by his side, with masses of brown hair falling aside from his bold forehead.

"How dare you turn aside my arm!" fiercely growled Black Larry, "If you try that game again, I'll strike the knife into your own heart——"

"You will neither strike me, nor my friend," calmly responded the Stranger, as his dark blue eyes shone with a clear deep light.

"We'll see—we'll see!" shouted Black Larry, as he drew another knife from his vest—a hilt of gold, a diamond head, a blade of long and slender steel, it was a splendid instrument to cut a throat, or sever a heart. "Come—take that knife—you look like a man—we'll fight! Come!"

"We will not fight," said the Stranger, whose calm voice rang through that gloomy cellar, as he folded his muscular arms across his chest. "You ask me why? Because you are a brave man. You will not strike me, for I never harmed you. My friend here, may have wronged you, but remember, he was maddened by wine. I know you are brave—in your calm moments, you would scorn to take advantage of a man in his situation."

Black Larry gazed upon this man with a surprise he had never felt before. He beheld that proud form, towering in its young manhood, with an involuntary admiration, while the noble countenance, with the firm lips, white forehead and deep eyes, combining in one expression of calm dignity, won insensibly over his soul.

"You are a brave man. I know you are not a coward. There's my hand. But look you, this friend of yours——"

"I know it all!" said the Stranger, "Listening in the gloom of this cellar, I beheld the scene in all its details. Harry," he continued, turning to his friend, who abashed, confused and humbled, stood by his side, "It was his Sister, whom you treated rudely. Think on it, my friend, *his sister*! You are a Virginian—you scorn to receive a blow, but you also scorn to be guilty of a causeless insult. You will——"

"By Heaven, Mount Laurel, you take the very soul from me, with your voice and look," cried Blair, as with the mark of Larry's finger on his throat, he advanced toward him: "There Stranger's my hand. I did n't know it was your sister, and beside I meant no harm. Last winter, in this very den, I was attracted by her mild face. I endeavored to persuade her to return to virtue, but still in answer to all entreaties, she only said—'It is in vain! I have fallen! There may be repentance for a lost Angel, but for a fallen woman none!' "

"You said kind words to her? You——" gasped Black Larry, clutching the hands of his late enemy: "For that good deed, may God——it's not often I take that name on my lips, I tell ye—bless your own sister! I know you have one, by your look. And as for the blow, mark you—here I am without arms, strike me; come! Don't refuse! Strike me in the forehead—Come!"

And he drew his tall form erect, and flung his long curls back from his shoulders, while his arms hung by his side, and his chest heaved under its glittering chains.

There was something impressive in that sight.

Mount-Laurel stood gazing upon him in silent admiration; the vagabonds looked on the scene in wonder. Harry Blair, completely sobered by the scenes of that dark cellar, looked upon him for a moment, while his countenance glowed with an expression of mingled meaning.

Then clenching his hand, he raised his arm; Black Larry anticipated the blow, but did not turn his eye aside, nor move one inch.

"Do you think I'd strike you?" he suddenly cried, grasping him by the hand, "You've but a sorry idea of old Virginia, Stranger!"

And all the while, the dying girl stood on the table, holding the light above her head, while her bosom heaved beneath its covering of rags, and her matted hair fell along her bloated cheek, now glowing with unnatural excitement. Her eyes blood-shot and encircled by swollen lids, darted a wild and burning glance as she murmured words like these:

"Come, Mother, come! We are in heaven now—hush! Do you see the angels, so beautiful! In their white robes, by still waters, with harps in their hands! There they are, they smile on you, Mother, on you! And there—O hide me now—it is—GOD. He frowns on me, he turns his face away, he—ah, they rend me from you. Forth from this place of light and beauty, Go! Do you hear their voices? Go! Kiss me once more, ere we part, on the threshold of this beautiful place, kiss me and say, Good bye daughter, good bye forever! For while you dwell in light and beauty, I must—ah, is it not a fearful word, that now sounds in my ears, *Forever!* I toiled so hard for you in yonder world, and now to be separated FOREVER!"

And she sank slowly on the table again, placing the lamp quietly by her side, as she said with a shudder:

"I must work all night, Mother, or else we will starve. Ah, Larry will come, be sure of it; yes he will! How sound she sleeps—hush! Her cough is stilled. Let me lift the coverlid and look upon her pale face. O, God—she does not move, she does not breathe—she is cold—dead!"

While Mount-Laurel, the Student, and the vagabonds stood in a group, touched by the same emotion, Black Larry took his sister by the hands and whispered:

"Only one word Alice! *His name!*"

The name of the Destroyer seemed to tremble on her lips, when a loud shout, echoing from the narrow passage, disturbed the silence of the cellar.

"Kidnappers!" arose the hoarse shout once again: "Down wid 'em, de white niggers!"

Then the sound of hurried footsteps was heard, a sudden plunge, as though five or six men had been precipitated down the narrow stairway,

and the glare of lights streamed through the door, upon the darkness of the cellar.

In that sudden light, the Students came tumbling through the confined door, rolling over one another, until you beheld only a mass of heads and arms and legs.

Following them, with uplifted lights and gleaming knives, a crowd of negroes, their dark faces distorted by rage, appeared in the door, treading on one another's heels as they jostled together, while their shout, rung from twenty throats, yelled on the air:

"Kidnappers! Down wid 'em—cut de white niggers throats!"

That cry quivered through the cellar—now blazing with light—like an alarm of fire. Up from dark corners, ragged negroes, by groups of two and three started from their slumbers; that vague mass of rags, which lay along the floor, sprang all at once into life and action; cries, shouts, curses, the shuffling of many feet, added to the confusion of the scene.

A minute had not passed, ere the cellar of the Devil's Grave presented this singular picture.

The negroes standing shoulder to shoulder, their brawny forms hung in tatters, formed a circle with their uplifted lights and glittering knives. In the centre of this circle, stood the Students, recovering their feet and gazing round in surprise and fear. Near them stood Black Larry, his stalwart form presenting a fine contrast to the slender figure of Harry Blair, who had taken position by his side. Their knives glittered in their clenched hands.

Do you see that tall form, standing in the shadow behind the figure of Larry, his back leaning against the table, while his arms are folded over his breast? His head is drooped on his breast, while with a meaning smile, he gazes upon this scene of uproar with uplifted eyes. The convicts stand by his side, scowling with brutal anger, as they grasp their knives; the wretched Alice, sitting on the table at his back, mutters her ravings, twining her thin fingers in her matted hair. Yet Mount-Laurel stands there, calm and smiling, as though he was surrounded by the cheerful faces of a wedding party. Is he armed with deadly weapons, does his white vest conceal the pistol or the dagger?

"Look here darkies!" shouted the tall mulatto Brown Bill, as he advanced a single step from that circle of dark forms and glittering knives, "Do yo' see dis wood-axe? I'll plant it in dat fellar's skull wid de beard: come on!"

He raised the axe and advanced toward Black Larry, his teeth grating with rage, when a form, which had been doubled up on the floor, straightened itself erect and confronted the Mulatto.

"I say nigger, damme, this isn't the fair thing," mildly observed Beau Silkemsoftly; "Do you take us for outsiders, do you think we want to ring in?"

Is vain was the polite bow of the Count; in vain his tone of mild per-

susasion. With one blow of his left hand, the Mulatto—as if disdain to strike him with the axe—felled him to the floor. This action roused the Students' blood.

"Come, boys, draw your knives and upon them!" shouted Walmsey of Walmsey-Dell.

"Hurrah, upon them!" echoed the others.

"Stand back there, let me advance alone and settle this fellow!" said Black Larry, as he grasped the gold hilt of his long dagger, "I've managed such gentlemen before! Come nigger, drop that axe, or I'll be cross with you!"

But the sturdy mulatto stood his ground, raising his axe, while his glaring eyes were fixed on Black Larry's bearded face.

The crisis of the scene drew nigh.

One hoarse growl arose from the hundred negroes, who darkened round the centre of the cellar. Some armed with knives, some with clubs, here one with a hatchet, there another with an axe, they silently moved toward the students awaiting the word of their leader, the muscular Mulatto to begin the scene of murder.

Black Larry advanced, his dark eye enlarging as it was centred on the Negro's face. At the same time he bent his wrist, until the blade of the knife lay along the back of his arm. There was danger in the movement, and the mulatto advanced a step, and as quickly retreated, as if thrown off his guard.

"Down wid de kidnappers!" arose that hoarse yell once more; "Upon 'em, de white niggers!"

"Dey take my fader," growled a negro, whose face was as black as the united characters of ten gambling Congressmen: "De ole man dey tuk away—Yer's de knife dat 'ill split dere ribs!"

"Come on darkies—down wid yer heads and pitch into 'em!" cried a faint brown gentleman, brandishing his club, "Dat's de way to fetch dese white trash, like a load of bricks!"

"Come on boys, let's dissect these subjects!" shouted the colossal John Smith, as clenching his fists he stumbled towards the mulatto Bill.

And then in answer swelled that hoarse ominous growl, which betokens danger, when it is heard in a crowd of enraged negroes. The moment for action had now arrived. Hemmed in on every side, the students had no other choice than to fight their way from the cellar, or be murdered in this vile den like dogs.

Black Larry advanced, and with one rapid movement of his left arm, wrenched the axe from the mulatto, at the same instant raising his right arm to strike the dagger to his heart.

His arm was in the air, the glittering blade shone over the mulatto's head, when a footstep was heard, and a hand was laid on Larry's shoulder.

"Hold! Do not stain your steel with his blood!" said a deep voice, and

Paul Mount-Laurel thrust him gently aside, confronting the negro with his calm face and commanding form. "Now fellow! Do you know me?" he exclaimed, fixing his eyes on the mulatto's visage.

"Paul Mount-Laurel!" burst in one simultaneous cry from the students.

With the celerity of lightning, Brown Bill stooped to the floor, seized the axe and levelled it at Mount-Laurel's head.

"Kidnapper!" he shouted, "Dat's him nigger!" The blow descended, the students started, as they anticipated Mount-Laurel's fate—but the axe glanced aside and sank into the floor. Mulatto Bill was pinioned from behind. Two firm arms clutched him by the middle, and as he lay hurled upon the floor, there, planting his foot upon his breast, stood the Indian, YONAWAGA.

"Mount-Laurel shall I kill him? Speak, and he dies!" said the Chief, drawing a pistol from his shawl, while his eyes flashed with indignation as he stood there, an image of manly strength, his chest heaving and his long straight hair falling on either side of his face.

"Do not harm him!" said Mount-Laurel gently, "Now"—turning to the enraged negroes, while his form swelled proudly erect, and his eyes flashed with anger: "Now, look on me, one and all! Do you not know me!"

He muttered a word, which only reached the negroes' ears; with the fingers of his right hand, he traced a sign on his uncovered forehead, which was seen by their eyes alone.

As though some supernatural hand had changed them in that instant, from enraged beasts into men, the negroes gave utterance to a wild murmur of joy, and one old man whose white wool was contrasted with his coal-black face, rushed forward and knelt at Mount-Laurel's feet, pressing his lips to the shoes of this singular man.

"God bress you Massa, you was de man, you ——"

"Hush!" cried Mount-Laurel gently, "Do not speak a word! But now that you know me, leave the cellar. Another time be careful, or you may again mistake honest men for—kidnappers!"

That murmur of joy deepened and gathered through the cellar. The joy of the Negro is as wild and frenzied as his rage. Pressing forward these wretches in rags, some runaways from the south, some the free lepers of the Quaker City, encircled Mount-Laurel with their brawny forms, muttering their broken ejaculations in a confused chorus.

"I'll tell you what stranger, if you got any more of that kind o' thing, which quiets the darkies, I'd like to borrow some of it, myself!" said Silkensoftly staggering forward, his slim figure quite limber from the effects of the late blow. "Where d'ye keep that Wool-quieter, that Darkie-dispeller, any how?"

"I've seen some curious scenes in my time," muttered Black Larry, his features stamped with astonishment, "But this beats them all!" He sheathed his knife, and turned toward Harry Blair.

"You don't know Mount-Laurel," whispered the student; "He's one of those mysteries which won't be explained, until the very remote day when the funds of the United States Bank are expected home."

The vagabonds muttered to one another, whispering sagaciously that this beat their eyes, and burnt their time, and said Number Ten, "It goes a-head of me, clear into next week."

"Hurrah," cried the students in a breath, "Hurrah for the Prince of good fellows, Mount-Laurel!"

Meanwhile poor Alice, sat in her rags and shame upon the table, telling her Mother, that she should hope on to the last, and not fear hunger or cold, for — and then her voice grew low and deep and thrilling—Larry would come at last.

Still in the centre of the scene, stood PAUL, the object of every eye, his face illumined by the lights which the negroes held in their hands, while an expression of deep sadness came over his face. Was he thinking of his Bride?

"Now that you know me, leave the cellar!" said Mount-Laurel. Like well-trained soldiers, moving at the command of their General, the negroes hurried from the scene, pouring in a dense mass through the narrow door. In a few moments the last one disappeared, the huge mulatto, who had raised the axe against Mount-Laurel's breast. Yet ere he passed through the doorway he hoarsely shouted; "Massa when you want dis child to fight for you, jist say de word, an' Brown Bill's on hand!"

"Now my boys," cried Mount-Laurel, turning to the students, "I have a word to say to you. I have followed you to this den, in order to fulfil my WAGER."

"Yes, yes, the wager," gaily cried Harry Blair, advancing, "This night a week ago, at a jovial carouse which we held at the United States Hotel, you agreed to show the party a scene, which would *surprise* and *delight* them more than anything they ever saw in their lives, or forfeit two hundred dollars. Was it not so?"

"It was, by all the darkies in Alabama," cried the stout John Smith, "And in case this scene did surprise or delight us, more than anything we ever saw, we were to pay the expenses of the spree!"

"That was it," exclaimed Fat Timothy, "I'm sure Mount-Laurel you'll show us something nice; they do say you sport a Haram!"

"Imagine nineteen or twenty lovely girls, dancing the Polka, while we look on!" exclaimed Walmsey, "Fine sight Mount-Laurel—eh?"

"And then the wines," said Mackey, smoothing his fiery hair back from his face—"Delicious Burgundy, sparkling champagne, glorious old hock—ah! My mouth waters already!"

"The brandy," said Jimmy Nix, "Soft and oily yet devilish, with 1796 stamped on its dusky bottles! The fact is Paul, you'll do the thing up handsomely; a regular feast, a —"

"A banquet celebrated in a large saloon, dimly lighted, with the eyes of beautiful women reflected in each glass of wine, the soft sound of a kiss echoing from twenty pair of lips at once—ah, Mount-Laurel, you are a glorious representative of the Sybarites of old."

"Come, gentlemen, it is after nine o'clock, and we must go," said Paul, moving toward the door, "Will you not join us, Sir?"

Black Larry, who had been gazing upon this scene in wonder, hurriedly replied:

"An hour ago, I would have gone with you, to any carouse, though the Devil poured out the wine, and the women were his imps, but *now!*" He pointed to the table where the crazed Alice was murmuring her strange fancies: "*Now!* One year ago, I left a sister, pure, happy, beautiful. You see I'm a rude fellow, and have seen some hard times, but is n't that a sight to touch the heart of a devil? That thing on the table is my sister!"

He turned away to hide the agony which convulsed his features and choked his utterance. Fired as the Students were, by the prospect of a voluptuous revel, the accents of Black Larry filled them with an earnest sympathy. Mount-Laurel whispered a word in the ear of the Brother, and then turning to his companions, shouted in a voice of careless mirth:

"Come boys; let us away! Now for the *wager!*"

"*THE WAGER!*" echoed the Students, and with one accord, they hurried from the cellar.

Their steps had scarce crossed the threshold, when YONAWAGA stole silently from the shadows of the cellar. As he approached the table, Black Larry was surprised by the sight of that bronzed face, stamped with deep emotion. Those dark eyes shone with a savage glare. The chest of the Indian heaved with violent agitation, while his arms shook, as he passed swiftly along.

"*My sister!* She is not here!" he murmured, and Larry beheld his tall form pass into the shadows of the doorway.

Black Larry was left alone with the three vagabonds and his Sister. The lamp on the table was flickering in the socket. Its faint, uncertain light, threw a ghastly glow over the rude faces of the outcasts, while Alice, her eyes fixed on the air, looked like some strange spirit aroused from the slumber of the dead, by an enchanter's spell. And still she murmured to her Mother, and bade her hope, for Larry would come!

The place was silent and gloomy, now glaring with a sudden flash of light, and now enveloped in midnight gloom. The pauper in his rags, the murderer with his brand, the thief with his prison garb, stood in a group, gazing silently upon the brother and sister.

The lamp flickered lower in the socket.

"The name of your—*husband!*" whispered Black Larry, as he drew near the dying girl. Still her glaring eyes were fixed on the air, still she

sat erect on the table, her hands crossed on her lap, while her bosom heaved with a scarce perceptible motion. She gave no sign that she knew her brother, but remained in that fixed position, while her swollen cheeks warmed with a brighter flush, her blood-shot eyes fired with a wilder light, her lips parted in a smile of joy. The throbbings of her bosom grew faint and fainter still; in a few moments those white globes fluttered in their garb of rags, with the almost invisible motion of a dying bird, quivering its wings for the last time.

She was dying. Her soul was departing from that body of disease and pollution, to a better——no! No! Not to a better world or a better form, for there are reverend men who assure us, that this soul, now departing from the body which had been polluted by a holy Elder, who lifted the Communion Cup on Sabbath day, was going forth to eternal darkness. Yes, after the black night of this world, she was going to the blacker night of——we dare not write the word. We are but human; we cannot say it.

Yet it was a sad thing, to witness the going forth of that young Soul! Perchance——pious people who serve the devil six days in the week, and give the Seventh to your God, do not read this sentence, for it is blasphemous——perchance, the same Jesus, who looked from his Cross, where he was stretched in bitter agony, and smiled upon the Magdalene, who wept in silence at its foot, now gazed from Heaven and gently whispered to the passing soul—*Alice! Come up higher!*

And the rude brother who gazed upon her now; was there not a horrible intensity in his agony?

He had seen men wear away by starvation, he had been in a solitary boat on the ocean, when a living man was slaughtered day by day, to feed his comrades' hunger; he had seen death in the ghastliest shape it ever takes, by fever, steel, or poison, but this last hour of a wrecked and polluted girl, was more terrible than all.

"Alice!" he shouted, in her freezing ear, "I must know this *husband's* name. If there's a God, I will know it. Tell it to me now—with your last breath, or if you die with that secret untold, I swear to rend it from your heart. Alice! Alice! Your husband's name!"

The lamp gave one faint flutter and went out.

By its last gleam, the Brother beheld those flashing eyes shine with one solitary glance of consciousness. At last she knew him!

All was dark now; the hands which he grasped grew suddenly cold; he placed his ear to her lips, to ascertain whether the last breath had borne her Spirit home, and that breath fanned his cheek, uttering in one gasp, a fatal name:

Then she was dead.

"CALVIN WOLFE!" she gasped and died.

CHAPTER THIRTEENTH.

NORA.

LET us wander into the northern districts of the city.

We will leave the den of Graveyard Crow, located in that haunt of misery, on the borders of the City Proper, near the boundary line of Southwark and Moyamensing. Traversing the heart of the city, we will hurry some two miles northward from the State House.

Do you see that huge building lifting its enormous walls, high over the surrounding structures, which seem dwindled into nothing by comparison with a red glare, flashing from each of its thousand windows? Do you hear the sounds that groan and thunder, from the cellar of this mammoth edifice to the roof? Perhaps it is a great festival hall, where an army of revellers feast with wine and music? Wherefore this sound, this light, this motion? Look through those windows, rendered almost opaque by foul air, look by the glare of the red lights, and the mystery is explained.

There you may see an army, but such an army never crouched beneath the lash of the Slave-Driver in the cotton-fields of the south! While the Steam Engine growls his unceasing thunder, here in rooms, filled with an atmosphere as dense and deadly as the blast of an unclosed charnel, you may see men and women and children bending down over their labor, which begins with the sun, and ceases not when the night comes on. But such men, such women, such children! The women with their pale faces, reddened by an unhealthy glow on either cheek, while their heavy eyes with swollen lids, look like the eyes of dead people, roused from their graves by some unearthly spell; the men with contracted forms, shrunk limbs and faces, stamped by the iron hoofs of Want; the children, dwarfed, stunted and hollow-eyed, with no smile upon their white lips, no hope in their leaden glance.

This is a Factory. This place crowded by miserable forms, swarming to their labor in rooms rendered loathsome by foul air, and filled with floating particles of cotton, that seize upon the lungs and bite them into rottenness, is a Slave-House. These men, these women, yes, these children, are only called so, by a stretch of courtesy. Their real name which they all bear, written alike in fearful characters upon the brow of man and woman and child, is—**SLAVE**.

In the South, they drive stalwart Negroes to the cotton-fields, and bid them labor, but they feed and clothe them well; nay, in some cases the ebony-faced African is treated with the same kindness as the Planter's own child.

In the North, they are too liberal to our black slaves. They manage the

thing much better. First they rear an immense structure, filled with innumerable looms, and thundering with the roar of the Steam Engine. Then they call aloud to every man who has a family to feed, to every woman who has a sick mother to support, to every child who is in rags; 'Come, we say, come and toil for us. We are the Manufacturers. Come, come, we say, come and toil for us, from daybreak until dark, and after dark. Every year, from the sweat and blood which you expend in our Factory, we will coin our thousands, yes, our tens of thousands of bright, round, solid, beautiful dollars. We do not force you to work. Oh, no. This is a free country. But if you do not work for us, and work for a pittance, which would not feed the Dog which is kennelled in our factory-yard, why, God help you, this is a free country, and you must starve!'

And then the poor wretches crowd to the Factory, and labor till consumption gives them a welcome release; or until they forsake the cells of the slave-house, for the more cheerful haunts of the grog-shop, or the brothel, and all the while grave Editors, who—abuse the Planters of the South, as heathens, tyrants, and man-stealers—cry hail to the blessed spirit of Manufactures! And solemn Senators on the floor of Congress—who thank God they do not represent a slave-state—swell the shout, and brawl at the top of their voices, Glory to God for the Revolution, but ten thousand Glories for the Tariff of '42!

We do not mean to express an opinion, either one way or the other, on this Tariff, or any thing of the kind. All we desire to do is to bring a simple question home to your heart, Mechanic and Laborer. Does the Manufacturer give you one dollar more for your week's labor, when the Tariff is called '42, than when it is styled '46?

Does he not discharge you, when his Party is beaten at the ballot box? Does he not threaten you with starvation, unless you vote for his Political Creed? In fact, does not every Manufacturer, hold the lives of at least three hundred men and women and children in his grasp?

When the Manufacturer or the Monopolist, secures to you, Mechanic and Laborer—not good wages merely—but your just proportion of the profits, which he makes out of your sweat and blood, then join in his Political War-Cry, but not till then.

Let the Mammoth Factory blaze with its thousand lights, but we must hurry on. You may be sure, that for one mile round this slave-house, the very air is tainted with misery. You may be sure, that starvation crouches on its nest of straw in these dim alleys, while in yonder darkened court Nakedness shivers under its coverlid of rags. You may stake your life, that poison-shops abound in this slave quarter of the Quaker City, where drugs are sold to little children, who scarce can reach their hands to grasp the glass, and to young women who burn with the gnawings of Consump-

tion, and to old men, on whose low foreheads grey hairs look hideous and grotesque.

We will pass these dim alleys, these darkened courts. We will not enter these Poison-Dens, but while the mist sweeps over the roofs we must hurry on.

We will leave the Germantown Road, and turn down Master Street. Some few paces toward the east, and where do we stand?

In front of a market-house, which extends far along this wide street, as it opens to the north from Master Street. Yonder to the south-east, at the distance of a few paces, the heavy outlines of a red brick school-house, break into the dark sky.

A few paces from the school-house to the east, lies Second Street. Northward on this street, not more than a hundred yards from the school-house, arises the walls of St. Michael's Church, and southward at the same distance, you may behold the Catholic Nunnery. These localities are worthy of your serious recollection, for let me tell you, in a few days this quarter of Kensington, will become the scene of strange and terrible events.

Let us look upon this block of buildings, which lie to the west of the market-house. Some of them face to the east, some to the west, here you behold a rude fence, reared along the street, and here a front door. This block is built on a triangle of ground, formed by three streets. Starting from the foot of the street, in the centre of which the market-house is reared, a narrow street or alley extends to the north-west. This is called Cadwallader Street. Yonder, at the distance of some two hundred yards, this alley or street, is crossed by Jefferson Street, which also bounds the northern extremity of the market-house.

You will therefore observe that the base of this triangle is formed by Jefferson Street on the north, while the acute angle touches Master Street, where the wide street and this alley meet. In one word this triangular block, lies surrounded by the market-house, Cadwallader and Jefferson streets, like an island whose shores are washed by three separate streams.

At the corner of Master and Cadwallader, a lamp glares faintly through the mist. Leaving its dim light, we will plunge into the darkness of the alley. Here we behold a house of time-worn brick, there a toppling frame; on every side the crash of looms, urged by weary hands even at this hour, disturbs the silence of the night. And faint rays of light steal out from narrow windows along the street, revealing the exterior of these haunts of misery and want. At every twenty paces, we behold a miserable court, shooting away from this narrow street toward the west, the roofs of its tottering tenements, almost touching overhead.

And all is dark, save those faint gleams of light, and all is still save the crash of the looms, as they swing to and fro.

In the centre of this island of houses, facing on Cadwallader Street, while its yard extends eastward to Washington Street, in which the market-house is built, there stands a two-storied house, distinguished from the surrounding habitations by peculiar features.

Not so much for its height, for its two stories look like an one story house, suddenly stunted in the growth. The front wall is a dark red brick, with pieces of timber placed upright and crosswise, along the surface. A single narrow window on the first floor, is lighted by a faint and dusky glow, which straggles through the discolored panes, along the dark pathway. Above, smaller windows with the sashes torn from their unpainted frames, vary the surface of the structure with two square masses of shadow. It is evident, that the second floor is untenanted.

Were we to enter this dark alley, which intervenes between this structure and the frame house on its northern side, we would behold a spacious yard extending from the rear to Washington Street, and covered with clumps of miserable herbage, broken glass and piles of old bricks. A rough board fence, separates it from the street.

Let us enter the only tenanted apartment, in this miserable structure. Through the narrow door, into a large and dreary room. By the gleam of a farthing candle, which flaring and melting over the black bottle in which it stands, is placed on yonder table, we may behold the details of the place. In yonder corner is placed a wretched bed, beneath whose tattered coverlid, you perceive the outlines of a human form. The door leading up stairs, is closed with nails, the one leading into the cellar, is concealed by a weaver's loom, which with its dark timbers and uncouth machinery, arises in the faint light like an engine of torture. There is but one chair in the room, and that stands by the bed, with a broken pitcher placed upon it. The walls covered with smoke and crumbling with decay, are destitute of picture or ornament of any kind.

Nay, we are wrong. There is one picture, one ornament. Right above the flaring candle, an Image of the Saviour rudely moulded in plaster, an Image of the Saviour stretched upon the cross, breaks on our eyes.

Is there not something at once eloquent and solemn, in this almost grotesque plaster cast of the Redeemer, placed above the only light in the poor man's hut, as if to say to him at all hours of the day and night, Look up Brother, and behold me! As you suffer now in hunger, want and pain, so I suffered eighteen hundred years ago, and suffered for you! As I triumphed, so you will triumph. As I passed from the rude Mechanic's dress; into robes of light and immortality, so you will pass. Look up, Brother, for the day of your redemption is near!

But hush—there is a groan from yonder bed. A low-toned, short quivering cry of pain. The ragged coverlid moves, and a hideous face, scarcely human, arises slowly in the light. It is a loathsome face, and yet it is lighted by large blue eyes, and shaded by golden hair whose waving masses

are slightly touched with grey. But from the brow and the cheeks and the swollen lips, the Pestilence in all its ulcerous deformity stares in your face. A long thin arm, with the skin clinging to the bone, is raised above that head, and the fingers clutch that disfigured cheek.

"Water! Mother of God—Water!" gasps a faint voice, and the hand wanders along the coverlid in search of the pitcher.

Then a deep groan breaks on the air, and the miserable woman falls back upon the bed, with fever burning in her heart and glaring from her eyes. Uttering that low-moaning sound, she tosses to and fro, grasping her cheeks with her long skinny fingers.

It needs no second glance to tell you the name of her disease. It is that Plague which enters the rich man's palace, crushing beauty into loathsomeness, and riots in the huts of the poor, striking down the old man and the tender child and the toiling woman, with its leprous touch.

Suddenly—while the faint moan of the plague-stricken woman trembles on the air—the street door opens, and a tall man with broad shoulders and muscular limbs, rushes to the light. He stands there, with his unshaven face stamped with an expression of stolid despair. His attire is simple, a check shirt, patched trowsers and torn shoes, yet his form unbent by the misery of fifty years towers erect, with the bearing of a soldier. Were he attired in glossy broadcloth, his face might be termed dignified, bold and imposing in its outlines, but now it wears but one expression, a look of savage ferocity that appals you. The dark eyes sunken beneath the compressed brows, the forehead with its short stiff hair, silvered with streaks of grey, the lips parting from the clenched teeth, in a smile like the distorted grimace of a starving man, these all indicate a bold and fearless nature, urged by overwhelming misery to the last extremity of despair.

"Water," gasped the sick woman, "Water!" And she turns restlessly to and fro on the miserable bed, clutching at the air with her skinny fingers.

"Water, did ye say Kathleen, dear?" growled the man, without turning toward the bed, "Thank Jasus, *that* is chape! Is n't it a wonder that the kind jintleman o' th' facthory does n't tax that too? Water is chape, but bread Kathleen, Och, it's the bread that's dear! Six wakes on a strike—you're a proud man Gerald O'Brien, to refuse to work for two dollars an' fifty cents a-wake! It's a big sum o' money to support a family, that! Och, you miserable divil of a waver, d'ye bear the name of ould Ireland's kings, and can't get a dhrop of medicine for the wife, or a crust of bread for the child!"

"Mary child, a sup o' water!" the faint cry came from the bed of the sick woman.

As though a serpent had stung him, this miserable weaver, who strange to say bore the proud name of Gerald O'Brien, started on his heel and faced the bed. The expression of fearful agony which distorted his features, was lost in the gloom of the apartment.

"Och, *mavourneen*, and is it callin' for Mary ye are? Go to the Churchyard of St. Michael's and call there, and maybe the grave 'ill give up its dead! Six wakes ago, and Mary was here the darlint child, and Dinnis too, and Pathrick—three lovelier childer never blessed a poor waiver's hut! Och, Kathleen," he groaned with one burst of agony, "Did ye ever think that anything on God's blessed airth, could be as hard to git as—*bread*? Coffins, Kathleen, coffins, d'ye hear me now? Coffins is the dear thing, althegither? We bought three of them, *mavourneen*, and laid the childer side by side. It's a sawte slepe they're sleping now!"

"Mary, my child, will ye not hand yer own mother the sup o' water?" muttered the unconscious woman.

"And will ye drive me mad intirely? I tell ye six wakes ago, when us poor devils of waivers here in Kensington, struck for wages, the small-pox came into the poor man's hut, and took his childer one by one away! You fell sick a nursin' them, and now—och! It's chokin' I am, Kathleen—there's naither bread nor petaties in the house, and as fur medicine? Ha! ha!" he gave utterance to a wild howl—"Did n't ye hear the Docthor this mornin' order you chicken broth, and all sich soothin' things? *Chicken broth*! and if it was to sell my soul to the devil, I could not git one crust o' bread!"

The woman raised her ulcerous face, and gazed upon him with wondering eyes, as he stood there clenching his hands against his forehead, while his tall frame quivered in every inch.

"Mary! Water!" she gasped and then laid down to her rags and fever again.

Uttering a deep groan the weaver sank on his knees, with his convulsed features turned toward the light.

"Holy Jasus!" he cried, reaching his toil-worn hands toward the Image; "They say ye tuk the form of a poor man wonst, and have the heart to feel for the poor man's thrials. Look at me, Jasus! Am I a thafe, a murderer, that I should see my heart's blood wrung from my bosom, dhrop by dhrop? Have I not toiled, slaved, worked like a dog, to kape my wife and ehilder a home? Now look on me, and grant a poor man's prayer! It is not askin' for bread for myself, that I am—though not a crust has passed these lips for two days. But Nora, my last child, has gone out seekin' bread, medicin' for the mother—Jasus, let her not return without some hope! That's all I ask; only grant this won request, an' if it's yer will for me to die, starvin' like a dog, it's not myself that 'll utter one word, or make one moan!"

The wind pouring through an aperture in the wall, above the table, flung the glare of the light, full in the face of the frenzied man. His hands were clenched, as if in the death-gripe; the veins of his bared throat swelled like cords. His face distorted by the intensity of his agony, was terrible to behold.

"Swate Jasus, smile on the last child, smile on poor Nora!"

And then bowing his head upon his broad chest, he suffered his clenched hands to fall by his side, while he listened with silent agony for the welcome sound of his daughter's footstep.

For a few moments there was silence, only broken by the faint gaspings of the plague-stricken woman.

"She does not come!" said O'Brien, with an accent of despair; "She has failed—or och, it's a dark thought—she has left her poor father for a better home!"

He arose, rushed toward the light, and drew forth the drawer, from the table.

"And it's come to this at last!" he groaned, clutching a knife, whose wooden handle, was attached to a long and glittering blade, "Gerald O'Brien's been the honest man, all his life, and now its come to this!"

An expression of savage ferocity, darkened over his countenance.

"The first man, dressed in the smooth broadcloth, with the gold in his purse, must give me that which 'ill buy the bread and medicin' or——"

His voice died away in a deep murmur, but the fingers of his sinewy-hand, clutched the knife with an iron grasp. He went slowly from the room, closing the door softly after him, yet turning his face over his shoulder, ere he disappeared. The light, poured on an instant over his convulsed features and glaring eyes, and then the sound of his heavy footstep, resounded from the street.

Silence once more. The Mother has sunk into a short and feverish slumber; the light flares over the bare walls and dark loom, and miserable bed. In that uncertain light, the image of the Saviour, seems to gaze upon the haunt of poverty with a darkening brow. All is silent and desolate there.

Suddenly a footstep resounds from the street, the door is flung open with a sudden movement, and a young girl, stands panting and trembling on the threshold.

A young girl, with her hair dashed wildly aside from her flushed face, while her bosom swells beneath the faded shawl, which encloses her form. One hand, tightly clinched, as though it grasped a holy thing, is raised to her throat, while the other thrown by her side, quivers even to the finger-ends, with fear. Her eyes, flashing from the expanded lids, glance nervously from side to side.

"Insulted again!" she cried, starting forward a single step, "Last night a generous stranger, shielded me from insult. But to night, who shall protect me? Ah—I hear his step, he approaches, yes he comes to repeat his insult. Mother!" and she sprang with one wild bound to the bed. "Mother, the honor of your Nora is in danger. For sake of Heaven, protect your child!"

And she flung her hands over the tattered coverlid, one yet clenched,

while the fingers of the other, still trembled with terror. The Mother moaned in her sleep, but made no answer to her child. Turning her glowing face over her shoulder she beheld the rude plaster cast of the Saviour. In that moment of quivering fear it seemed to smile upon her, the unprotected girl.

Again she darted to her feet, and on the very spot, where her starving Father had knelt not ten minutes before, she sank upon her knees.

"He comes," she gasped, "I hear his step. Ah—he is on the threshold—he gazes upon his victim. Blessed Saviour, protect a weak and trembling girl! Holy Mary, save me from his touch!"

As she raised that small clenched hand toward the Image, her hair, not clustered in tresses, but descending in one luxuriant mass to her shoulders, waved aside from her glowing cheek, while her eyes were uplifted in a look of silent prayer.

The shawl which girded her panting bosom, was faded and worn, the gown of coarse calico, from whose skirt appeared her small feet, enveloped in coarse shoes, was but a miserable garment, soiled with the mud of the street and patched in many places, yet her face was invested with a charm, that an Empress might have seen with envy.

The hair which waved aside from her face in one drooping mass, was at once as dark as midnight and as red as the dawn. Now it floated along her cheek, like the wing of the raven, dark and glossy, and now, as the light shone over its tresses, they glowed with all the purple of a summer twilight. The red tint so far from detracting from her beauty, imparted a deeper blush to the roses on her cheeks, a purer fairness to her skin, which seemed like alabaster warmed by a sunbeam. The color of her eyes was in harmony, with this rich mass of hair. A deep grey, more expressive than black, like the azure of the sky softened and refined by the approach of night, they were susceptible of every expression. Now they were upraised in a look of trembling supplication. Her mouth was small with whose warm moist lips where red, reflected the blushes on her cheek. Her shawl worn and faded as it was, thrown slightly aside, revealed a neck as white as snow, with the delicate veins swelling from the unstained skin with the same emotion that heaved her bosom and flushed her face.

In one word, even as she flung herself all panting before the Image of her Saviour, it might be seen that she belonged to that class of poor wretches, whom nature by some strange freak of her power invests with marvellous loveliness. A poor girl! What right has she to possess either beauty or virtue? Wherefore should her faded garments hide a fairer form, a lovelier bosom, than the faded darling of wealth, or the palled child of vice can boast? A poor girl! O, what an unspeakable volume of woe and wretchedness, temptation and despair is written in these three short words!

She quivered in every inch of her frame. She heard a footstep on the threshold; her tempter was gazing upon her, even as she knelt in prayer.

That footstep advanced, he came to lay the hand of violence on her young form. She quivered now with additional horror, her face flushing in more vivid hues, glowed with a deeper beauty, her bosom swelled with the agitation of that moment, even until it touched her dimpled chin. Another step, she dared not turn her head, but she heard him come. Another! All color forsook her face, pale, trembling, fixed to the floor, as though she had been transformed into stone, she awaited the issue of her fears. A hand was laid on her shoulder; it thrilled her in every nerve. She gave utterance to a faint shriek, and starting from the floor turned her pale face over her shoulder, while her eyes wandered in terror to the Tempter's visage. Her bosom was turned to the light, while her face inclined to one side, stood out from the background of the gloomy apartment, with its delicate profile and flowing hair, revealed in striking relief. At this moment, trembling in every nerve, with one hand still clenched, pressed against her throat, and her head turned over her shoulder, she looked very beautiful, that poor wretch, even as she gazed in the Tempter's face.

One earnest look, and the blood rushed to her cheeks again, she sprang forward, with a sudden cry.

"O, joy! It is *you*!" she ejaculated, "You will protect me!"

She sprang toward the Stranger, as though she would clasp her arms around his neck, but as suddenly sank back again, blushing to the very tips of her small ears.

"Nora!" said a kind voice, speaking in deep manly tones, and PAUL MOUNT-LAUREL with his tall form still clad in his Bridegroom dress, advanced and extended his right hand.

Gathering that clenched hand closer to her bosom, she advanced a step, and surrendered the fingers of her other hand to his manly grasp, while her face kindled into a living smile.

"Thank God, *you* are here!" she said hurriedly, as though some strange emotion forced the words from her heart. "I know not your name. I do not even know, from whence you come. But I know——" and her voice deepened, while her eyes grew moist with tears; "that you will protect me! Last night—O, I shall never forget it—as I hurried along Chestnut Street after dark, I was followed by a villain who was dressed in the garb of a gentleman. He insulted me, nay laid his hand upon my arm, when you appeared and hurled him from the sidewalk! To night he followed again, tracked me to this lonely home, whispered his offers of shame to my ears, and you——may Heaven bless you for the good deed——you generous stranger appear to rescue me, once more!"

Paul folded his arms over his whole vest, drooped his head, and gazed in her glowing face. An expression of deep melancholy darkened his uncovered forehead, over which his chestnut hair lay tossed in clustering masses.

10

"I rescued you last night, Nora. To night I rescue you again. How

do you know that this generous conduct, as you are pleased to term it, does not mask some dishonorable motive?"

He spoke with an accent of bitterness, while his flashing eyes perused with a fixed glance, the loveliness of her young countenance.

"You, cherish a dishonorable motive, *you!*" And she looked up into his face with a look that made him start from his fixed attitude, it was so full of virgin confidence and sisterly faith.

"But I am a man, Nora; I have an eye for loveliness, though it is veiled in a miserable shawl like yours. I may not be rich enough to purchase your love with gold, therefore I assume the mask of generosity and virtue. I do not seek to purchase your form alone, but first to corrupt your soul, in order that you may become altogether mine. Is it not so Nora?"

That deep whisper, thrilled her to the heart, while the gathering emotion of Mount-Laurel's countenance began to impress her with a strange awe.

Still gazing upon his face, she could only gather her hands to her bosom, and exclaim with a blush; "*You seek to corrupt my soul! You!*"

"In one word, Nora, I am a—*gentleman!*" And Paul drew nearer, while his voice deepened in emotion. "You are a *poor girl*. Were you the child of wealth and luxury, I would be forced by public opinion to marry you in order to possess your love. But you are *poor*. As a *gentlemen*, mark you, I am justified in seeking your love, by any means but—marriage. To marry a poor girl, when you can seduce her—bah, what miserable folly!"

"Can it be, that you are like the villain, whom you hurled from the sidewalk, only last night?" said Nora, with an accent of overwhelming despair. "Then may God protect a poor and miserable girl!"

Paul shaded his eyes for a moment, while Nora beheld the lower part of his face quivering with emotion.

There was silence for an instant, while she stood gazing upon him with an expression of doubt, wonder and fear.

He took his hand from his eyes, and looked in her face, with that earnest gaze once more.

"Be frank, Nora!" he said, with an almost fierce look and emphasis, "You *fear* me. You know that I wear the mask of generosity, only to conceal the *villain* and *seducer!*"

The face of that poor girl became very pale. She retreated from the deep gaze of his flashing eyes, while that expression of doubt and fear, deepened over her young countenance.

"You *fear* me! confess it—you look on me with suspicion?"

"Fear you?" she cried, and the doubt and fear, were succeeded by one burning blush of joy, "So do I fear my Mother, who lies stretched on yonder bed, in the agony of disease!"

"You trust in me then?" said Paul, veiling his eyes, while his voice quivered with emotion.

"As I would my brother!" was the reply of the poor girl, and her eyes and cheeks, flushed and glowed with all the eloquence of a sinless faith.

Paul bowed his head upon his breast, and his face was shadowed by the clustering locks of his chestnut hair. Nora looking upon his tall form, in mute surprise, beheld him quiver from head to foot, with a strange agitation.

The silence which prevailed was suddenly broken by the sound of a footstep. Nora glanced toward the door, and started with a shriek toward Mount-Laurel.

"Save me!" she cried in the excitement of the moment, clasping her arms about his neck. "Save me! It is the villain who insulted a poor and unprotected girl!"

The intruder advanced, and with his eye-glass raised, looked sneeringly upon that sight; a young and beautiful girl, clinging to the neck of a handsome man, while her hair streamed in one rich mass to her shoulders.

"Count I am glad to see you?" And even as the girl clung to his neck, Mount-Laurel smiled, while he surveyed the form of the stranger.

It must be confessed that he was altogether the man, to fascinate the heart of a young and romantic maiden. His form—which to be frank with you, was somewhat burly and corpulent displayed its portly outlines in a green frockcoat; covered from the hem to the throat with braid, and glittering along the broad chest, with a massive chain, from whose extremity his eye-glass dangled. His face may have been young or old, or handsome or hideous, but you could never come to any definite understanding on its peculiar merits, for it was shut off from all human view by an enormous beard, which began at the ears, and did not seem to have any end at all. Between this beard, and the well-brushed silk hat, which covered the upper part of his head, you beheld some vestiges of a nose, very slender near the thick eyebrows was but exceedingly well developed at the end, and colored with a bright pink withal. On either side of this organ, a small eye twinkled over the mass of beard, like a glow-worm in the centre of a haystack. In fact his whole appearance indicated the gay young man, who wild and dashing in his exterior, takes the heart of innocent maidens by storm, and makes sad havoc among the romantic widows. He wore boots and spurs, and a delicate segar appeared in the centre of that world of hair, which in the poverty of language we are forced to call a beard.

"Well I'm here. You remember our bargain? Fulfil your promise, win the girl for me, and the money is yours!" and the foreign gentleman took the segar from its hiding place in his beard, as he advanced a step nearer to the girl, who still clung around Mount-Laurel's neck.

Do not for a moment imagine that this gentleman discoursed in English. He spoke in French, slightly twisted with Russian. Nora heard his foreign accent, and gazed on him, with wonder and fear.

"I will fulfil my promise!" said Paul also speaking in French. "Take

you hear your Count. I will converse with the girl in your hearing. You understand, if you do not speak English?"

The Count replied with a bow, and then withdrew into the shadows of the room. He displaced the pitcher from the broken chair, and of course unconscious that a miserable woman stricken by the small-pox, slumbered so near, he seated himself by the bed, puffing earnestly at his cigar, while his eyes were fixed upon the form of the young girl, still clinging to Mount-Laurel's neck.

"What mean you?" whispered Nora, "You speak kindly and to this man?"

Paul gently unwound her arms from his neck.

"Nora, I have much to say to you," he said in a solemn voice, "will you listen to me?"

"You can say nothing that will harm me to hear!" exclaimed the young girl, and all wonder and expectation she stood by the table, with her eyes fixed on the manly face of Mount-Laurel.

In order to appreciate this scene in all its details, you will please observe yonder dark loom, which arises at the foot of the bed. This loom, conceals the entrance to the cellar below, and stands some two feet from the wall, its complicated machinery enveloped in gloom.

The air pouring through the crevice above the table, cast the full glow of the solitary light, over Mount-Laurel and Nora, during the progress of the scene, which we are about to witness.

"Let me ask you, Nora, what is it you grasp in your right hand? Ever since I entered the room, I have seen your fingers tightly clenched together."

She unclosed her fingers, and disclosed the object which she had clutched with such a nervous grasp. It was a half-a-dollar; as she held her open palm toward Mount-Laurel, the bright silver, was strongly contrasted with the rosy tint of her small fingers.

"Ah—I perceive—the wages of your labor for to-day?" said Paul in a careless tone.

"The wages of four days labor, Sir?" Nora drew forth from her shawl some vest patterns, elegant in their texture and color, and laid them on the table. "Here sir are four vests, which I am to make up in three days, for the tailor in Chestnut Street."

"Surely I did not understand you." You do not mean to say that the half-dollar, which you hold in your hand, is all you received for the labor of four days?"

"Alas—it is too true! and these vests, which I am to make up in three days, will only bring me, the same sum."

"But these are costly vests," said Mount-Laurel bending over the table, "such white Marseilles as this, I have bought of Bogg & Dogg who make my clothes, for six dollars. You surely do not mean to tell me, that you

their diamonds and gold into the 'Missionary basket,' for the poor heathen! Warmed by the same enthusiasm which thrilled through the breasts of thousands, I have torn the chain from my neck, the diamond from my bosom, and swelled the contributions for the heathen, with an eager hand. Little did I then know of the truth! That in this godly Philadelphia, yes, in dark alleys where God's sun never shines, where his Bible never comes, there exist heathens, compared to whom, the savages of the South Sea, are pure and blessed! That here, staring us in the face, is misery—hollow-eyed, ragged misery—which would draw tears from the Angels of God!"

His deep voice rung in all its startling emphasis through that chamber of poverty and pestilence. While the girl looked upon him with a vague wonder, he gazed fiercely, yes, with a flushed cheek and flashing eye, into the shadows of the room. He approached the loom, and with a hurried movement drew forth, from the darkness which surrounded its rude machinery, two old chests, which he placed near the table, in the full glow of the light.

He motioned Nora to a seat.

Wondering and silent, she sank upon one of the chests, with her face turned toward the loom. Mount-Laurel sat opposite, his flashing eyes perusing every lineament of her countenance. So much there was of emotion, so much of silent agony in that long earnest gaze, that the poor girl felt her cheeks glow and her eyes fire, as she sat trembling before him.

"You are very beautiful, Nora!" he whispered, bending forward; "Had I a sister, it would be the dearest wish of my heart, that she might resemble you!"

"You—" faltered Nora, blushing from the throat to the brow, "You would be ashamed to own a poor man's child like me, for your sister. You who are so rich, so proud, so——"

She finished the sentence by a glance at his handsome form, while the blush which overspread her face, deepened on each cheek into burning crimson.

"I may be proud Nora, but who told you I was rich?" exclaimed Paul, still gazing on her glowing countenance. "My friend the Count, whom you see yonder in the shadows of this room, is rich. Ah, he counts his slaves by thousands, his wealth by millions! But Nora I have much to say to you. I have that to speak, here is this room of pestilence and want, which will swell your young heart, until it rises to your throat. Promise me, that you will listen, listen patiently, until I have done?"

"Why need I promise? You can say no word of evil to the poor man's daughter!"

"You are very beautiful Nora—may do not blush for it is truth. But your form is clad in this miserable shawl—a bonnet, that the fine lady of Chestnut Street would not touch with her foot, veils these auburn tresses, whenever you walk abroad. Say one word, and this faded shawl shall be

exchanged for a dress of satin, this painful head, for a bonnet, whose plumes might not shame the brow of a queen ! Only one word Nora !——

“Surely, you mock me ! It does not become you Sir, to make a jest of my mean attire !”——

“As Heaven sees my heart, I do not mock you ! I speak the solemn truth. Say one word, and you shall pass from the gloomy hovel to a palace. Instead of gloom, want and misery, you shall behold light, luxury and splendor. Only one word Nora, one word.”

“And desert my poor mother, and leave my father desolate ? Never ! My palace is where there is home, my luxury to wait by my mother's bed to soothe the sadness from my father's brow !”

“But your mother lies there dying not from disease, but for want of medicine and food ! Your father I met even as I entered the dark alley which leads to your door. There was despair written on his wasted face, a despair that no words can picture. As he rushed by me, he grasped a knife in his right hand. Perhaps, even now, he has committed some hideous crime ; I do not wish to deepen your misery into utter horror, but even now, your father, may have taken the life of a human being for bread.”——

“Blessed Mary, Mother of Mercy pity me !”

Her face became suddenly pale ; veiling her eyes in her hands, she bent down in the effort to hide her tears.

“Yet listen Nora ! Only speak this word, and your mother shall be placed on a comfortable couch, surrounded by anxious attendants, cheered by every comfort that wealth can minister. Your father shall be lifted from his want and despair, into competence—safe, nay wealth. You Nora, you shall——”

“Oh, is this not a dream ? That word, tell it to me, that I may speak it with my whole heart !”

Her face flushed, her blue eyes gleaming even amid their tears, she started forward, clasping her hands over that bosom, which heaved and fluttered beneath the faded shawl. Paul looked upon her with a glance of deep sadness. Did he repeat the purpose of his soul ?

“Hold, one moment Nora.” he said, in a tremulous voice, as he gently took her hands within his own, “ere you decide, let me tell you what I mean, by a palace.” Here rising from your sleep on a hard couch, you toil all day ; you wander forth in the dusk of the evening, to seek your taskmaster, exposed to the insults of every vagabond, who may chance to look upon your beautiful countenance. There, in the Palace, which I see before me, your young limbs shall be lulled into repose on beds of down, from whose silken curtains, you shall look forth every morning, upon scenes of luxury and splendor. Not a wish, but shall be gratified, not an appetite, but shall be satiated to the full. You have endured the darkest extreme of poverty—the want of bread. There delicate viands, shall ap-

pease your hunger; the richest wines give warmth and vigor to your chilled blood. Every day will bring its pleasure, every night its revel. Behold your form no longer clad in this dress of faded hues, but wrapped in folds of lace and satin that blaze with diamonds, glide into the brilliant saloon, while an hundred eyes are fixed upon your face, in wonder and admiration. Beautiful woman look on your peerless loveliness with envy, proud men kneel at your feet, eager to obey your slightest wish——"

"Ah—I have read of scènes like these, in story books, that my poor dead brother once brought home," said Nora, as her dilating eyes, seemed to behold the future which Paul had drawn; "But it is all a dream. You surely do not mean to say, that I can live like a great lady, by saying one word!"

"Mary!" groaned the slumbering woman; her hollow voice quivered through the dark room like a sound from the grave: Tears again started to the eyes of the poor vest-maker.

"Blessed virgin forgive me! I am thinking of scenes of pride and splendor, while my poor Mother, calls my dead sister to her side!"

She darted from her seat, and in a moment knelt by the bed of the fevered woman.

Paul sat alone by the light, his face darkened by strong emotion, as he heard the young girl sobbing in her mother's arms.

"I cannot go on," he muttered, "It wrings my heart, I will not ——"

Glancing aside into the gloom, he beheld the composed figure of the bearded Count, seated near the door.

"I have promised, and I will!"

The murmur had scarce passed his lips, when Nora stood before him again, her face crimsoned in one warm glow, while her deep blue eyes, gleamed with a strange light. She trembled from head to foot. The shawl had fallen from her shoulders; her entire form was revealed, clad in a worn and faded gown, which laid bare her white-neck, and a glimpse of her virgin bosom. As she stood there quivering with emotion, all the voluptuous beauty of her shape, lay open to the light. Her hair, tossed gently to and fro, by the wind which came through the crevices, now wore the red flush of the dawn, and now the darkness of midnight. Paul started with surprise, as he beheld that beautiful form, clad in its miserable garb stand panting and trembling before him.

"Speak the word and I will echo it!" she faltered, as her tresses waved along her flushed cheeks.

"Look yonder Nora, do you behold that kind gentlemen sitting in the shadows of the room?"

"The villain who insulted me? What has he to do with that blessed word?"

"Nay, not villain. You speak harshly my good girl. No man is a villain who has money, save in the pages of the Bible. You mistake the

character of this good gentleman. He is noble, generous; he would rather sacrifice—a—a—banquet, than be guilty of a mean action. He comes to you, Nora, he offers you wealth, luxury, splendor. He, the noble Count Waliskow!"

"What mean you? The wretch who insulted me last night, who not an hour ago, repeated his offers of shame?"

"Not wretch, but—*gentleman*! Listen, Nora, I must speak plainly, and you must hear me. This kind and amiable Russian nobleman, now on a visit to our poor republic, would bear home with him, a trophy of his power, conquered by gold, from the dark hut of Poverty. That trophy, a young and beautiful girl!"

"Blessed Mary, a light breaks on me! And that word——"

"Soft, my good girl! Hear me to the end. He loves you. He would press his kiss upon your warm, ripe lip. He would gather your young and virgin bosom to his arms. Yes, twining his fingers in these rich tresses, which wave along your cheeks, he would whisper in your ear, 'You are mine, sweet girl, body and soul, all mine!'"

As though the hand of death had touched her, and by one word changed her form into marble, pale and trembling, Nora cowered back upon the chest. Her hands concealed her face, while her low deep sobs mingled with the faint groans of the plague stricken-mother.

"See how I am tempted!" she gasped, without raising her head, "I am but a poor weak girl, and you tempt me with words of luxury and wealth. I am but a poor weaver's daughter—with my father starving for want of bread, my mother dying for lack of the merest comforts of life—and yet you whisper this terrible temptation in my ear. 'Marry this villain, only marry him, and your father shall be rich, your mother live!' Oh, you are noble—generous, spare me, for Heaven's sake, pity me!"

"I spoke not of marriage!" said Mount-Laurel, as his features grew dark, while his tone chilled the warm blood in the maiden's veins.

She raised her eyes to his face, and shuddered. For a fearful expression gloomed over his brow, at all other times, so white and calm; a strange fire gleamed from his eyes, which were wont to impress the beholder with their clear, deep light.

"You spoke not of marriage——" she gazed intently in his face, placing her hands on that young bosom, which swelled beneath her faded dress, as though her heart would burst.

"I spoke one word, which you are to utter in answer to the question asked by me." And Mount-Laurel's brow grew dark, while his voice was deepened by some inexplicable emotion. "That question will you listen to it? The count Waliskow asks you, Nora O'Brien, daughter of the poor weaver, 'Will you become my—*MISTRESS*!' The answer—the word, on which your mother's life hangs, is simply—*Yes*!"

The last sound had not died on his lips, when Paul started back, appalled at the effect of his words.

There before him, her hands clenched by her side, her eyes flashing with an anger like madness, while her young form seemed to tower almost into manly stature, stood Nora O'Brien, all color banished from her face, along whose pale cheeks floated the heavy tresses of her auburn hair.

"And is it to me," she gasped, in the frenzy of the moment, falling into the idiom of her father's tongue. "Is it to me, the daughter of an honest man, that you dare whisper your words of shame?"

She paused, gasping for breath, while Mount-Laurel started to his feet, stricken dumb with surprise. He knew that this poor girl was young and gentle, all innocence and confidence, but had not dreamed that her soul was capable of such fierce energy, such impassioned scorn.

"Burned be the tongue that spoke it! Blasted the heart that thought it! And you—oh, the luring son of the deed should eat the heart from your bosom—and you, to creep into the confidence of a poor girl, so that you might buy her into shame, with the price of a mother's life!"

"But Nora, I am your friend. I have your happiness at my heart——"

Proudly that poor girl towered erect, while her blue eyes darkening into black, with intense light, made her cheek seem yet more lividly pale.

"My mother was a Saxon, but in my father's veins flows the blood of the O'Briens, who once sat on old Ireland's throne! It's their blood, that burns in my bosom now, that forces these words to my lips, that bids me tell you, that your friendship for me is like the love of the wolf for the lamb, the hawk for the dove! It's not only a coward that you are, but—let it burn the ears that hear it—a traitor!"

"Why should you be virtuous?" said Mount-Laurel fiercely, "What right have you to be virtuous? Are you not poor? Let the good people in silks and broadcloth, who hear drowsy prayers in grand churches, apply their time to virtue and religion! What claim has society on you? Does it not cast you off, speak, does it not force you to do the work of a slave, for a pittance that would not feed a rich man's dog?"

The excitement of that hour, was too much for Nora. Even as her form towered erect, even as her blue eyes flashed with wild light she sank back on the chest, sobbing like a very child. Her auburn tresses fell over the hands which veiled her face. Paul could not see the writhings of that countenance, but he beheld the bosom fluttering with a short, quick pulsation, while the tears fell drop by drop between her trembling fingers.

One glance he cast upon the figure of the Count, who sat calmly in the shadows of the room, and then started forward, as though he would have flung himself at the maiden's feet. Restraining himself on the very action, he resumed his seat, gazing upon the weeping girl, with a look of deep interest.

"And would you make sport of the poor girl's religion?" And Nora

looked up sadly into his face, while the tears flowed silently down her cheeks, "and do you ask what right the poor have to be virtuous? Ah, did you but know, how *swate* a thing it was after the toil and want of a long wake to stave away to St. Michael's church, where the poor meet together, as brothers and sisters, knalein' before God's Host, while the blessed Mass, steals the sorrow from the heart and the cloud from the brow! Oh—and to think the Blessed Mary, was once a poor woman like me, and suffered like me, and knows me, and hears my prayer, and looks from heaven on me, and—do you hear—loves me?"

"Oh, the poor man's home is dark enough, but without the light of the Blessed Virgin's face it is dark night, indade! Look—hard-hearted man—does not the Holy Jesus, frown upon you with anger, even as you sit before his face?"

She pointed with her small hand to the Image, which hung above the table. The manner in which the lamp was placed threw a strong shadow over one side of the face, while the other glowed in red light. The dark side was turned toward Mount-Laurel, who could not repress an involuntary shudder, as he beheld the outstretched finger of the maiden, pointing to that Plaster Face, as to the face of Brother and Friend.

At the same moment the sick woman tossed in her fever, and murmured the name of her dead child, "Mary!"

The poor girl shuddered and placed her hands over her eyes.

Paul bent forward, and spoke in a deep whisper:

"Can you hear the groan of a dying mother, and yet scorn my proposal? Remember, in a few hours all will be over! Your mother dead, your father crazy, or worse—a *felon*! For the last time, I ask you, in the name of your father, who now wanders in the streets, starving and mad, in the name of your mother, whose death-groan quivers in your ear, will you accept fortune, luxury——"

"*Shame!*" said Nora, as she rose to her feet, all color vanished from her face, while her hands dropped listlessly by her side, trembled as with a spasm. "*Shame!* Will I buy health for my mother, bread for my father with eternal shame. That is your question, Sir. Do not let your tongue falter, as you speak it."

Paul turned aside from the wild despairing glance of her blue eyes.

When he gazed upon her again, he was agitated to the very soul, by an emotion that filled his heart, while it choked his utterance.

She stood there, her eyes upraised in mute despair, while her hands were clasped listlessly in front of her form. The shroud which binds the dead, is not more pale than her face. The shawl had fallen from her shoulders; all the voluptuous outlines of that young form, which, even in toil and want, had ripened into blooming maidenhood, were displayed by the folds of her faded gown. Her white neck, a glimpse of the bosom, now fluttering like

a rose-bud shaken from its stem by the wind, appeared amid the thick tresses of her auburn hair.

Pale, motionless, an image of Poverty and Beauty she stood there, her lips parted while her eyes were lifted up to God. Yonder, through the crumbling ceiling, yonder through the gloom of night, she raised her eyes and soul; there, was her only hope, there, even from the blackness, smiled the blessed face of Mary, the Virgin Mother.

"Be it so!" she said in a low calm voice, that chilled Mount-Laurel's blood. "Let the worst come! Though I stand in the desolate home, with the dead body of my mother on one hand, the maddened form of my father on the other, I will yet be pure. Even then the blessed Mother will smile on me, and love me. Be it so! Let the grave, which now shelters my poor brothers, my dead sister, Mary, gather us all in its cold clay—all, father, mother, daughter! The meanest clod that falls upon my bosom, when I am dead and gone, will be holier in the sight of God, than all the wealth which I could buy with my eternal shame! Be it so! Let the worst come!"

And as with that pale face and whispered tone, she spoke, the image of the Virgin, rudely moulded in lead, which was strung to her neck, by a plain ribbon, rose in the light, borne upward by her heaving bosom.

And the dying mother, tossing in her bed, moaned faintly the name of her dead child, "Mary!"

With a strange emotion, convulsing every feature, Paul started from his seat, and rushed into the shadows of the room. In a moment he re-appeared, dragging the Count Waliskow forward by the hand.

"Look you, my noble Count! You are rich; you count your serfs by thousands, your gold by millions! But here, in the breast of this poor weaver's child, throbs a heart worth all your gold, though every coin were worth your Emperor's crown!"

The noble Count, with the frogged overcoat and world of whiskers, understood but little English, yet there was a language in Mount-Laurel's eye, that went right home to his heart.

"Look you, my noble Lord! You have shone in the courts of Europe; titled dames have not shamed to sell their charms for your gold. Does it not gail you, to see the scorn that flashes from the eye of this poor weaver's child? You who have bought Beauty when her brow was encircled by a coronet, to be scorned by the child of Poverty! Defied even in the hut of disease and want! Oh, Count, this is indeed, a bitter hour for you!"

"And you," growled Waliskow, speaking an uncouth French, while his small eyes twinkled from their universe of beard, "Who are you that insult me, thus? Did you not promise to urge my suit? Who are you?"

His portly form was not deficient in majesty, as he swelled erect, folding his arms over his broad chest.

But Mount-Laurel towered above him, his brow darkened, his lip curved, his outstretched finger pointing to the door.

Meanwhile, her blue eyes roving from face to face in wonder, Nora stood a silent spectator of the scene, her half-raised hands clasped nervously over her breast.

"Who are *you* that taunt me thus?" again repeated the Count.

"Your master!" And Mount-Laurel bent toward him, as though he would crush him with his muscular arm. "Do you speak of gold? Then I can buy you and your serfs with one half of my fortune! Who am I? Do you speak of Power? Then am I your Master still! For at one syllable from me, nay, a sign drawn in the air by this finger, a thousand men start up from the shadows of this great city, ready to work my will, eager to obey my slightest word!"

The Count, great nobleman as he was, shrank back from the deep light of those flashing eyes, the calm dignity of that towering form.

"To-night—at your wedding—" he faltered in Russian French, "It was said that you were—*poor*. Yes, it was whispered that the rich merchant had condescended to bestow his child on an unknown and friendless stranger."

"Well, well, I grant it; I am very poor," said Mount-Laurel, in a calmer tone, as though he had in a moment of unguarded anger, revealed a secret, hitherto confined to his own breast. "Poor in money, but rich in the affection of generous hearts, strong in the possession of a Power, which might shake this city to its foundations. Let me aid your memory, good Count. One night, pursuing your *honorable* adventures, in the southern quarter of the city, you grossly insulted a poor but virtuous girl. Poor *but* virtuous—amazing! Is it not, my dear Count? A crowd surrounded you; they were about to rend you in pieces; the brother of the girl had you by the throat, when a word spoken by a stranger, who suddenly appeared on the scene, set you free. Do you remember it, Count?"

The bearded nobleman recoiled with involuntary surprise.

"That stranger was——" he exclaimed.

"Your poor but *respectable* friend, Paul Mount-Laurel!" And the sneer which curled the lip of this strange man, deepened into calm scorn. "Now, Sir; you know me! Go!"

He pointed to the door, while his chest heaved and his outstretched hand trembled. It was not with fear, you may be sure. For his large eyes, sunken beneath the compressed brows, glared with dangerous light.

The Count retreated a single step, and then calling a congregation of wrinkles to his low forehead, in place of a frown, folded his arms and confronted Mount-Laurel with his beard.

At the same moment a hand—a hot, burning hand, each finger seivering the spot where it touched—was laid on his shoulder.

Mount-Laurel started back with a cry of surprise, while Nora stood as if frozen into marble.

The Count turned, and uttered not a cry, nor a groan, but one prolonged discordant howl of horror.

There at his side, stood a half-naked form, with a white sheet falling from the shoulders, while the long bony arms protruded from its folds. There at his very shoulder, a hideous face appearing among locks of flowing hair, glared in his visage. It was a loathsome sight, those blue eyes glaring upon him from that mass of ulcers, that countenance leprous with the pestilence.

The darkness of the room was all around that wretched form, the flowing hair waved even to the white shoulders, but the red glare of the lamp streamed over the face, lighting the burning eyes with a wilder glow, and crimsoning the ulcers with a more loathsome horror.

It was a dark scene; it was a moment of breathless terror.

On one side Mount-Laurel, shrinking from the sight with uplifted hands, on the other Nora, pale as death and motionless as stone, in the centre the whiskered nobleman, cringing as he felt the touch of that burning hand, and there glaring from the darkness, that tall, gaunt figure, clad as in a shroud, with the burning eyes and leprous brow.

For a moment a silence like death prevailed.

"Mary!" murmured the frenzied woman, "Give me my daughter—where have you taken Mary?"

The Russian nobleman who had come to this hut of poverty and want, to purchase beauty with his gold, shrank back appalled from that hideous face. Slowly he retreated towards the door, his eyes still rivetted upon that tall gaunt form, with the sheet flowing around its pestilence-stricken limbs. Trembling all the while like a convict who stands upon the gibbet's platform, with the rope about his neck, he grasped the door, and rushed forth into the street.

Paul, Nora, and the Mother, stood there in the warm glow of the light; a strange and contrasted group.

"Forgive me!" shrieked Mount-Laurel, as the emotion which had shaken his very soul, at last found rest in words: "Forgive me for the mask I have worn so long! Forgive me for these words of dishonour, these offers of shame! To you I kneel; I who never knelt but to my God before. In your form I worship the enshrined images of Poverty and Virtue!"

Sinking on the floor at the feet of the wondering girl, this man whom we have seen pleading the cause of gilded iniquity, with such mocking eloquence, now clasped his hands and gazed on her young face, with tears in his manly eyes.

Like a wintry rose, blooming suddenly from a bed of snow, so the face of the weaver's child burst all at once from the pallor of death, into the warm flush of youth and hope.

"You kneel to me—You!" And bending forward she gathered her luxuriant hair in her trembling fingers, and gazed in mute wonder on his face.

Meanwhile, silent and erect, in the sheet which enveloped her like a shroud, the Mother gazed upon the scene with her frenzied eyes.

Looking in her glowing countenance, with that glance of mute veneration, Paul took the young girl's hand within his own. She did not withdraw it, nor start with fear, as his touch thrilled her to the heart, for there was no sensual gleam in his long and ardent gaze.

His lips were pressed upon her white fingers; she felt that solitary tear; he started to his feet, and taking the plague-stricken woman's hand within his own, led her gently to the bed. He had no fear of pestilence, for the light of a holy resolve, shone serenely over his soul.

In a moment he stood before Nora once again, yes, trembling from head to foot, his cheeks and brow crimsoned in one burning glow, his eyes moistened by tears, his lips quivering, his hands clasped, he advanced from the shadows, and confronted the weaver's child,

"I will not offer you money," the words burst tremulously from his lips. "I will not call the blush to your cheek, by the sight of a rich man's gold. But, Nora, your father shall no longer feel the death-gripe of poverty, the leaden despair of hopeless toil. Your Mother shall live. Yes, you shall learn, that there is one breast in the wide world, which beats with sympathy for the poor man's despair—that feels for the White Slave of the crowded city, I say it, and my word shall not be broken!"

No Oath confirmed his words, but there was a holy eloquence in his eyes, an unalterable resolve on his firm lip.

Her heart fluttering with a joy too deep for words, Nora turned her glance for a single moment, from his manly face, and rested her mild eyes upon the Plaster Cast above the table.

Was it a fancy? An idle dream, which arose from the shadows of the hut, to bewilder the maiden's soul? Even as she looked, that face of the Blessed Jesus, rudely moulded in plaster, with the glaring light pouring over its white surface, seemed all at once to glow into life and warm in a living smile.

"Look!" And Nora clasped her hands, while her blue eyes gleamed with a holy light, "This is a blessed hour, for he smiles upon us, yes, the SAVIOUR, from the crumbling wall, smiles kindly on the gloom of the poor man's home!"

She turned again to face the Stranger, but Mount-Laurel was gone. Nora was alone. The faint cry of her dying mother, alone broke on the silence of the night.

She cast her eyes toward, the dark corner of the apartment, where the loom arose, concealing by its rude machinery, the entrance to the cellar. More than once, during the strange scene, which we have witnessed, she had heard confused sounds proceed from this corner, now like the subdued tread of footsteps, now like the hushed whispers of the voice.

A footstep, bold and decided, echoed round the apartment.

And forth from the gloom there came a manly form, with folded arms and large dark eyes, gleaming from a bronzed visage.

YONAWAGA, the Indian, stood before the weaver's child, the shawl still wound over his broad chest, while the blue uniform enveloped his tall figure. His bronzed face relieved by the long straight hair, was crimsoned with strong emotion; while his large eyes sunken beneath the compressed brows, shone with strange lustre.

Nora started back with a shriek.

"Whence come you?" she gasped, as her glance rested upon the imposing form before her.

"I have seen and heard all!" spoke the Indian in his deep guttural tones. "From the gloom in yonder corner, I have been a witness of this scene. Look you, my girl; I had a sister once, and therefore feel inclined to kneel at your feet, as Mount-Laurel has done. Would you like to see this Russian Count laid here on this floor, mangled—bleeding—dead? If so—speak the word—the knife of Yonawaga shall avenge you! Your brothers are dead; they sleep in the churchyard. But I, Yonawaga will be your brother!"

Starting back with fear, as this strange form burst suddenly from the darkness, Nora saw his eyes gleam, his cheek flush; she heard his words at first deep and guttural, but soon broken and tremulous with emotion.

No word passed from her lips, but gently clasping her hands she gazed upon him with a glowing cheek and dilating eyes.

"I will be your brother!" repeated Yonawaga, and his earnest gaze perused the bloom of her young face. "For you are pure—you are beautiful! The new-fallen snow is not more pure, that snow reddened by the last glow of the setting sun, more beautiful!"

His words deep-toned and thrilling, swelled the maiden's bosom, beneath her gently clasped hands. The image of the Virgin rudely moulded in lead, rose in the light with every pulsation of her heart. The Indian beheld that image, rushed forward and clasped it in his hand, even as it hung by a faded ribbon from her round white neck.

"This image of the Virgin—where did you obtain it?" he gasped.

His fierce look struck the weaver's child with terror; she uttered her reply in a whisper, while the color forsook her cheek.

"It was Madeline's!"

"And Madeline was——"

"My sister, and yet not my sister Many years ago my father—he was then a rich man—returning eastward from the lead mines of Dubuque, where he had amassed a fortune, found a poor child—starving and cold—alone in the midst of a desert prairie. He brought her home with him; she grew up with us as his own child, as our sister. This leaden cross was hung around her neck, when my father first discovered her——"

"And now"—groaned the Indian, in a tone whose agony no words can express; "She is dead?"

"Ah, no! Not dead!" sighed Nora, "For two months ago, sick of the poverty and want which darkened round the poor man's hearth, she left us. She is gone. This leaden image alone, is all that I have to remind me of my lost sister. For she was my sister, and we all loved her as though she was our own flesh and blood——"

"Lost sister?" echoed the Indian, and the fingers which grasped the image, shook like dry leaves; "Where is she now? Speak it out—do not fear me? Where is this poor lost sister now?"

"You say that you beheld the scene which just now occurred, in this dark room?"

"I did! Not a word, not a look escaped me!"

"And yet you ask me, 'Where is my *lost* sister?'"

Nora raised her eyes to his face; that glance of mute despair quivered through the Indian's heart, like an omen of Death.

"Madeline! Madeline!" groaned Yonawaga, and his bronzed face was darkened by a fearful emotion.

"Two months ago—it was a dark and dreary night—we sat here together, toiling away by the light of our dim lamp. The wind rattled against the window panes, and moaned dismally through the deserted rooms above. Madeline's face was pale with toil, with loss of sleep; she sat where you now stand, bending over the vests which she held in her fingers, while her large eyes—oh, they were dark and beautiful—were fixed upon the floor. We were alone, in this our desolate home. My father out in search of work, my mother wandering in search of—bread—my brothers ranging the streets, mad with hunger and cold, my poor sister Mary who now sleeps the last sweet sleep of the Poor, was away in the Factory. Oh, it was very silent and miserable our wretched home, there was no bread on the table, no fire on the hearth, and yet still it was our home. For a long time Madeline sat with her eyes fixed on the floor. At last she rose; she flung the vests beneath her feet.

"I will be a slave no longer!" she said in that voice, which heard from her lips betokened deadly passion.

"Then she paced the room wringing her hands, while her tears fell like the first drops of a summer-storm. A low moaning sound came from her lips. Now she stood before the light, and now was gone into the darkness. I gazed upon her half in wonder, half in fear, for the light of her large eyes which seemed to shine brighter even in the darkness, filled me with a strange dread.

"At last she came near to me. She looked on me—O, I will never forget that look of speechless agony. Her face was ashy pale, and her hair—O, it was long and dark and waving—fell all unbound over her shoulders.

"I have borne it long enough!"—even yet I hear her speak these words

in a whisper that cut me to the heart—"I will endure it no longer. Poverty and Virtue—what have these words to do with each other?" And then she smiled; O, that sad and bitter smile, I shall never forget!—Yes, I will accept his offers. I have resolved! Good bye Nora—I do not ask you to pray for me—for I am a poor lost girl! Good bye forever!"

"With these words she rushed from the hut. Yes, without bonnet or cloak she went out into the dark night, leaving me here by the table, too much amazed to speak—too much frightened to follow her. I have never seen her since."

Nora uttered the last words in an accent of profound grief, while the tears streamed freely down her cheeks.

The Indian stood with folded arms and downcast head, gazing upon her from beneath his darkened brows. He was very pale; his lips were white; the cold sweat stood out in beads upon his brow.

"And so she is gone!" he exclaimed in a deep voice, that echoed through the apartment with a strange and hollow emphasis. This was all he said; the agony that possessed his soul was too deep for many words.

Leaning her white hand upon the table, Nora bent her head gently aside, and one cheek was veiled by her thick tresses, while the other glowed warmly in the light.

"But all may yet be well!" she whispered, with a look of deep compassion: "I have heard from Madeline once since that fatal night. Nay, do not start, and gaze at me with such surprise; it is true. Not a month ago, a letter came to our home, containing these simple words: 'Nora, do not weep for me. I am lost, but the name of Madeline shall never be coupled with dishonor. That name—which speaks to me of my pure and happy hours, I will never bear again. When you would drop a tear for your poor sister, think not of Madeline for she is dead, but pray for LEOLA!'"

"Leola!" echoed Yonawaga, as he started forward and clasped the maiden by the wrist—"Speak—does she bear that name? Oh, this is worse than death! Leola! Better dead than dishonored! This very night, in the parlor of a Merchant Prince—as they style these wealthy traffickers—I heard that name whispered by brainless fops, and hollow-hearted ladies. She appears to-night at the Theatre; 'a new Actress, celebrated for her wit and beauty,'—so their whispers spoke of her. And she is my sister, and this is the end of all my toil!"

"An actress! Your sister!" echoed Nora, her face flushing with surprise; "But do not despair! She may yet be pure—even yet you may redeem her—"

"Give me the Image of the virgin—the letter! Nay, no denial—I must have them. No time is to be lost. Farewell, girl—for your kindness to Madeline, may God's angels watch over you,—ah! To-night she appears in the crowded theatre, an object first of admiration, next of —sale. For this, Millstone, for this, you must render a strict and terrible account!"

Clutching the leaden Image and the Letter in his hands, while his bronzed features writhed with a despair like the agony of a wretch expiring under the torture; Yonawaga hurried from the room.

The maiden was alone once more.

The strange events of this night crowding surprise on surprise, filled her heart with a death-like apathy. She stood there, in the light, one hand resting on the table, while the other was raised to her bosom. Over her young face showered the glossy masses of her auburn hair; her lips were parted, her eyes half closed; her breast quivered with a faint and scarcely perceptible motion.

The moan of the dying Mother was heard no more. All was silent in the poor man's hut; all dark, save that small space of light, in the centre of which the maiden stood. Suddenly she started, exclaiming in a broken voice:

"It is my father's step! He comes! A terrible fear creeps through my veins. Starving, mad, with the thought of his dying wife at his heart, he has ——"

The words sank away into an unmeaning murmur. Even while she spoke, the door was flung open, harsh footsteps echoed around the room, and her Father stood before her.

His tall form, towering in its full stature, the check shirt thrown aside from his neck and bosom, he stood by the table gazing silently in her face, while his dark eyes rolled in wild joy. Not a feature in his face, but quivered with delight; but it was a delight more terrible than the fiercest despair.

"Oh, Father!" moaned Nora, recoiling from her frenzied gaze. "You have committed some crime! Mary the Virgin pity us—you, that always taught your children to love God and be honest, have been guilty of a crime!"

O'Brien flung his clenched hands aloft and gave utterance to a wild laugh.

"Look ye, my darlin' one!" he hoarsely exclaimed: "There's a wild joy at your father's heart! Och, its meself that's goin' mad intirely! But look there? Whilaloo! Is it not sound and bright and beautiful, altogether? Fresh out o' th' mint, as I'm a sinner!"

As he spoke, he unclosed his hands and scattered a mass of silver dollars over the table. The bright coins rolled over the rough boards, with a clanging sound, that sank on the heart of Nora like her father's knell.

"Oh, Father, how could you do it!" She laid her hand upon his muscular arm, and looked up into his quivering features. A wild light flashed from O'Brien's eyes, as he gazed upon the pale face of his daughter.

"All that's left to me, come to my heart! Core of me soul, do you know that your miserable old father wronged you this very night, with a foul thought? Och, he thought that you had gone, and left him, like Madeline, afore you! And yer here, and yer thrue yet——Och, its meself that cud die kissin' you!"

He caught her in his iron embrace, and kissed her on the cheek and forehead, as she lay girdled in his stalwart arms.

"But the silver?" hesitated Nora, as he released her from that mad embrace.

"I wint from this miserable home, the devil at my heart, and the knife in my hand. Down the dark strate, I mit a well-dressed jintleman. 'It's starvin' I am—gould or blood I must have!' And' then in my blind rage, I ran at him, and shtruck with my knife!"

Nora sank on her knees, while the warm flush, which her father's kiss had called to her face was succeeded by a deathly paleness.

"You *murdered* him—" she gasped, with a shudder.

"I shtruck him with my knife, and it's no child's blow Gerald O'Brien strikes, d'ye mind? But the starvation was in my arm; the blow was turned aside; the strange jintleman caught me by the wrist. 'Yer starvin' my good man,' ses he, and then, I know not how, I tould him all my sufferin's!"

"Thank Heaven! You did not harm him?"

"Harm him? Sooner lift the hand against the Father o' me blood, than do it! For d'ye see darlint, there was tears in his eye, as I tould my story. An' when I'd done, he pressed the silver in my hand, and give me the pass-word and the grip, by which I'd know him again! An' the last words he said to me, was, 'Larn from this my brave man, never to doubt yer God, for who but him is Father to the Poor?'"

"How long ago was this?" said Nora, as the joy of the moment swelled her heart and flushed her cheeks.

"Jist after I left the house—may be an hour, may be a half hour ago. I was hurryin' home, when—when—it's no matter. I mit a friend; an Irishman; and we had important things to say thegither. Darlint, you may think how important these things were, when I tell you, that for the same, I left my sick wife, alone in her pain, for half an hour. There's dark times a-comin'—dark times for the Poor, but darker yit for the Irish Poor. Go into yer own room, Nora; remain there for fifteen minutes. Should you hear many footsteps pass through this room, do not be surprised. There may be voices in the cellar below—do not fear, Nora; no harm shall come to you!"

He lead her toward the door, which opened into her room.

"When the last footstep ceases it's echo, then ye may come into the room again. Not before on peril of yer father's life! When ye are in this room, 'tendin' to yer poor mother's wants, listen for the first footstep on the cellar stairs. It 'ill sound in less than half an hour. Then hurry into yer own room again, and do not look forth—on peril of your father's life, I charge ye!—until all is still. Now, go, darlint——"

"One word, father," said Nora, resting a hand on each arm of the weaver, "This stranger who relieved you? His name?"

"His name I do not know, but but there was honor in his young eye, and truth in his heart. A young man, Nora—tall an' hansum, with a white vest on his broad breast. That I rimimber, but the Pass-word and the Grip; When I forgit them, may the God that's above us this night, forgit me!"

In the wild warmth of his Irish nature, O'Brien clutched his muscular hands together, and raised his dark eyes to heaven, while his lips murmured a Vow.

"It is *he!* The generous Stranger, the good Angel of the Poor!" muttered Nora, as she stood on the threshold of her chamber, with her glowing face turned toward the light. "*He* has saved my father from death, and worse than death!"

A Prayer—as pure as ever ascended from a virgin heart—trembled from her lips, as she entered her poor chamber and closed the door. Yet ere she crossed the threshold, gazing on the rude image of the Blessed Saviour, as the flaring light streamed over its calm features, she beheld it kindle in a smile of love, that touched her soul.

Poor child of Superstition and Idolatry! To dream that a mere thing of plaster could smile, and smile with beaming tenderness, unutterable love! Why your godly men of the Holy Protestant League, would have gazed in that plaster face for a thousand years, and seen nothing but a scowl of anger, a frown of darkening horror. It may be, that the pure light which illumined the virgin's soul, shone over that plaster face, and made it look as though it loved her? God knows!

Gerald O'Brien was alone.

Sofly slumbered the pestilence-smitten wife; the bright silver dollars sparkled on the rude table; the loom struggled from the shadows like a thing of evil.

The Irishman stood beside the table, with his tall and muscular form rising boldly in the light. His throat was bared; the veins began to swell like cords. His head was drooped on his shoulders, his brow darkened with an ominous scowl.

"And is it to *this*, it's come at last!" he growled, in a voice hoarse with passion. "First, they starve the poor Irishman on two dollars an' a half a-wake, and now they come to crush his Religion! Yes—they would trample *his* Cross under foot, they would tear the Blessed Jasus from the poor man's heart!"

He knelt before the Plaster Image, and murmured a prayer, while his countenance, with the eyes sunken beneath the compressed brows, the lips clenched and the unshaven jaws firmly fixed, began to glow with an expression of peculiar meaning.

Suddenly the door was opened with a stealthy movement, and a strange crowd came thronging into the room. Rude men, attired in the work-day garb of weavers, with a look of settled ferocity stamped on each face, stepped silently, one by one, over the threshold and surrounded the kneeling Irishman.

"What my boys? Is it here ye are?" whispered O'Brien, as he arose and confronted the throng. "Ye know the way—beyant that loom into the cellar!"

Without a word, this strange band, whose unbroken silence was more fearful than the wild frenzy of an enraged mob, glided behind the loom, the tread of their heavy boots scarce making an echo.

Gerald counted twenty in all; twenty forms, with stout breasts, heaving beneath their coarse shirts, twenty faces, glowing with the same look of determined ferocity.

The four who walked last, bore on their shoulders a huge box of white pine; they were strong men, with sinews of iron, but their burden well-nigh bent them double. Silently they passed behind the loom, when the lid of the box was turned aside by a projecting corner of the untouth machinery, and something like sharp steel, glimmered for a moment, in the fading light. With a muttered curse, the lid was replaced, and the box disappeared behind the loom.

Still Gerald stood with his back to the light, gazing on the scene, with compressed lips and folded arms.

"Twenty four!" he muttered, "Three are yet to come!"

Again that stealthy tread, and three forms came hurrying from the threshold toward the loom.

"Gerald, darlint, is it there ye are?" whispered a jovial voice, and broad-shouldered man, with a round face, and small, fiery eyes, went toward the loom at a hop, skip and jump pace: "We'll have an illegant time I'm thinkin'!"

"Whist! You'll awake the poor wife! To the loom—to the loom, I say, Peter McDavid!" And Gerald with an impetuous gesture, motioned toward the loom.

"St. Patrick! What have we here? Och—I rimimber—it's the Father and his frind!"

His eyes were fixed upon the two figures who came last. The one who led the way, a tall man with broad shoulders; his face could not be seen, for it was hidden in the long cloak, gathered about his form, with folded arms. Stepping onward with lengthened strides, he passed into the darkness, without revealing his face, or once inclining his head to the right or left. Neither the faint moan of the fevered woman, nor the involuntary ejaculation of her husband, could arrest his attention.

Last of all, came a man of short stature, attired in a dark robe, with a cowl dropped over his face, and a large white cross suspended from his waist. He passed on without a word, and in a moment was gone into the shadows beyond the loom.

O'Brien was alone once more. For a moment he stood as if absorbed in deep thought; then he carefully closed the door, and approached the bed of his wife.

"She slapes, poor crathur ! Blessed Mary be mercifal to her, and send her paice !"

As this murmured prayer escaped his lips, his unshaven face, for a moment grew radiant with a softened expression ; but soon the gloom came over his face again ; his brow darkened, his eyes gleamed with a strange fire.

He advanced toward the table, while the candle—flickering in the neck of the bottle—flung a dismal and uncertain light around the room. Now the Image of the Saviour blazed in blood-red light, and now it was lost in darkness. Gerald stood there, the strange expression which darkened over his face, rendered more ominous by the fitful light. A mocking smile curled his lip, as he muttered his thoughts in a whisper :

"Yer Irishman, is somethin' like yer wild horse of the prairie. Ye may catch him—put the rope about his neck—the burden on his back—and he will sarve yer like a faithful slave, kind-hearted divil that he is ! Only treat him kindly, only temper slavery with the soft word, and no burden is too heavy for his back ! Sure he is ignorant of his own strength. A child kin manage him ! But once let him feel the blow—let the lash cutting into his flesh, tell him that he is, indade, a *slave*, and the divil himself cant rein him in ! Then he knows his strength and feels his blood ! By my sowl, many's the time, I've seen this same wild horse, tear his Rider with his teeth, and trample his brains into the dust, with his hoofs ! Take care of the Irishman, when ye lash his back, and make him feel his strength with your blows !"

Thus murmuring, while the flickering candle, cast a dark shadow over the face of the Plaster Image, Gerald O'Brien, went silently behind the loom. The faint moan of the dying woman, alone disturbed the silence of the place.

Many minutes paused, and still the flickering candle, flung its glaring light, every flash succeeded by its heavy shadow, over the miserable walls of the weaver's hut.

At last the light died away, in one sudden flare, which turned the moulded Image of the Redeemer to burning crimson. Then all was darkness ; the dying woman, tossing in her fevered sleep, murmured to the still air, the name of her dead child "Mary !" All was darkness, and half an hour rolled away.

Suddenly a cry, a faint yet thick and gurgling moan, like the sound uttered by a drowning man, thrilled on the silence. So was the cry of Death ; the last shriek of the soul, as it parted from its clay.

Nora—listening in the darkness of her chamber—heard that gushing moan and knew it for the voice of Death. She came rushing forth from her room, and stood panting, trembling beside her Mother's bed. All was darkness, but her extended hands ran hurriedly, over the sick woman's form. First the hands, smitten with that foul disease, then the bosom leprous with its touch, then the face, crushed into one mass of corruption, she felt them all, and the fatal reality thrilled like an ice-bolt through her heart.

"Cold—cold—all cold!" she gasped, as she tottered over the bed, "My Mother is dead—gone to join my brothers in the St. Michael's graveyard—gone to sleep beside my sister Mary!"

She fell prostrate on the bed, and lay insensible beside the body of her Mother, her arms around over the breast, her cheek resting against the cheek of the dead.

When she again unclosed her eyes, the rays of a candle poured over the bed. Her Father stood, gazing upon the body of his wife, with a darkening brow.

"Father, she is dead!" exclaimed Nora, with an involuntary burst of grief, as she arose and placed her hands upon his muscular right arm.

O'Brien pushed her harshly aside.

"Away—girl," he muttered hoarsely "to your room, I say! Not even the cry of yer dyin' mother, should have won you across its threshold!"

As Nora, trembling at the sight of her father's gloomy look, went slowly to her room, Gerald O'Brien stooped over the bed, and gathered the body of his wife, in his right arm. The light which he held aloft, steamed over the leprous face, with the long flowing golden hair—over the scowling brow of the husband, whose sunken eyes, flashing with strange light, looked not upon the dead.

"Are ye not gone?" growled O'Brien, turning to his daughter, who stood trembling on the threshold. "Leave the room, Nora, and don't come out again till I bid ye!"

Nora shrank into the shadows of her apartment, while Gerald O'Brien disappeared behind the loom, bearing the dead body of his wife, in his arms.

Ere we follow his footsteps, let us look yonder, upon the Market House, extending along the gloomy street, and behold—by the faint light of the stars—the figure of a man, leaning one of those brick pillars.

It is the strange being when we have known by the name of Paul Mount-Laurel. His head bowed on his breast, his arms folded, he stands there wrapt in his thoughts. But a moment past he pleaded the cause of the libertine, with Nora, the weaver's daughter, and now his soul warmed into active emotion, by the memory of the scene, he surrenders himself to that strange wild dream, which forms the great impulse of his existence.

"Beautiful but *poor*!" he murmurs, and that lip curls with a sneer of mockery, and he is silent again.

At this moment you behold certain dim forms, emerging from the gate of the weaver's yard, they cross the street in a confused crowd, and Mount-Laurel is surrounded by the Students.

"You have had your banquet!" he exclaims, turning his flashing gaze firm face to face, "Yes, in the tears and groans and agony of this poor girl! How like ye the festival which I prepared for you? 'A banquet celebrated in a large saloon, dimly lighted, with the eyes of beautiful women, reflected

in each glass of wine, the soft sound of a kiss echoing from twenty pair of lips at once, ha, ha, ha! Such was the festival, you hoped to share in—champaigne—beautiful women—the orgie of wine and lust, prolonged from midnight until day! And behold! Instead of all this, I show you the hut of poverty, with a poor girl, struggling against poverty and temptation! Did ye behold it all? Speak—from your place of concealment behind the loom, did you note every tear, did you drink in every groan? But I confess it—I have lost the Wager—here is your money, gentlemen! Divide it among ye, and let us meet no more!”

He extended his hand, but the students shrank away from the roll of bank-notes, as from a phial of Prussia ascid. They gathered around Mount-Laurel in silence; you could not see their faces, by the faint lights of the stars, but more than one hand was raised, to wipe away the starting tear.

“We may be drunken—wild—fond of fun and frolic, but we are not altogether—*brutes*!” exclaimed Harry Blair, in a voice that quivered with emotion.

“Brutes? What mean you?” cried Paul, with a sneer. “You have won the wager. Take your money, Sir!”

“Not one cent!” exclaimed Harry Blair, as he lifted his cap, and passed his hand over his heated brow. “What say you, my boys, shall I take the money?”

He turned to his fellow Students but no answer greeted his tremulous question. It was evident that they had some reason for their ominous silence. Was it anger, or a better and holier emotion? We cannot tell; but true it is that the entire band of Students, behaved in the most singular manner. The two corpulent brothers, Timothy and Peter, stood wiping their eyes, as though blinded by a cloud of dust; Walmsley, of Walmsley Dell, Old Dominion made an extemporaneous luncheon on the head of his cane, while the stalwart John Smith pulled his hat over his face, with both hands. The red-haired Mackey was engaged in a brief astronomical observation, for he stood with his back against a brick pillar, and his eyes raised to the zenith. As for James Nix, whose taste for champaigne was so decided, he drew a blue handkerchief from his pocket, and polished his face without intermission.

“Not one cent!” cried Blair, turning to Mount-Laurel—“I tell you, that we have lost the wager. You have both surprised and delighted us, beyond anything we ever experienced,”

“Pshaw! This is trifling!” exclaimed Mount-Laurel, abruptly, as he folded his arms and turned on his heel.

“*Surprised*—for we never dreamed that misery and want like that you have shown us, had an existence. *Delighted*—for we beheld this poor girl rise superior to temptation that might have wrought an Angel’s ruin! Take the money? By Heaven I’d rather go out to-night, pistol in hand, and rob on the highway!”

"And as for me, I think I'll have to go to old Chapman, for a 'watery affection on the brain,' " murmured huge John Smith, as stumbled forward—"Take the money? I'd rather rob a cripple! Keep the money Paul—apply it to the purpose you have in view—and if you'd do me a particular favor, just take this hundred, and relieve a dozen widows an' orphans without delay!"

"And a hundred from me!" exclaimed Walmsley, of Walmsley Dell.

"Fifty from me and Peter!" cried Fat Timothy.

"I'll go you a cool twenty-five!" exclaimed Jimmy Nix.

"Ten from me!" shouted the remaining Students, in a breath.

They placed their money in the hands of Harry Blair, who was quietly folding his own share of the fund—a hundred dollar note—with the rest, when a limber figure, with a hat bent all on one side, stepped from the shadow of the brick pillar, exclaiming:

"Gentlemen," said the voice, in a tone something between a sob and a snuffle. "Beau Silkemsoftly has n't much change on hand. Change is tight lately—dev'lish tight. But there's all I have—" and the broken-down dandy poked a finger in his right eye, as he extended a remarkably small piece of silver toward Harry Blair—"The last picayune by * * *!"

Harry Blair took the sixpence, and pressed it against the roll of notes, with his thumb. There was something in the tone and manner of this poor outcast, that touched his very heart.

"Beau—I did n't give you credit for so much feeling!" he said, in a voice indistinct and husky: "Here, Mount-Laurel, take this money, and use it as you will! This night has bound you to our hearts forever!"

"The heart of man is not so bad after all!" spoke the deep sonorous voice of Mount-Laurel, as he received the bundle of notes. "But you forget, gentlemen," he continued, in a tone of mocking gaiety, "I am the man of fashion—the blood of Chesnut street! What have I to do with the wants of the—Poor?"

"You were all this, only one short week ago!" said Harry Blair, gazing in silent admiration upon the fine face and handsome form of Mount-Laurel; "One hour ago, we were but drunken revellers. Now, you are changed, we know not how—but you stand before us, a new man! And here we stand Mount-Laurel, ready to work your will, with our fortunes and our lives!"

There was a strange magnetic power about this man. For with the tone of his voice, with the gleam of his eye, he had won the hearts of all these wild Students; even the outcast "Beau Silkemsoftly" felt his soul roused into new life, when he gazed upon Mount-Laurel's face.

"Our fortunes—our lives!" arose the deep chorus of the Students.

"But, gentlemen, you forget my character! A *gentleman*—wine-drinker—debauchee! Only a week ago, at our supper, I uttered words like these: 'We will have wine, my boys, wine! Not your miserable champagne, which glides down your throat to-night, and blows out your brains to-mor-

row, but something that mingles the fire of brandy with the rapture of opium ! Wine for the gods—huzza !' Such was the festival I promised you—take your money—I cannot touch a dollar !"

"Nay—you will not refuse us, Paul," exclaimed Blair, whose bold and manly features glowed with all the ardor of his sudden resolve : "Take the money, and use it, and use us all as you will !"

"Ha ! Ha ! You can't be serious, Blair ?" laughed Mount-Laurel—a cold, hollow laugh that chilled men's blood : "Only a week ago, as we made our Wager, you heard these words ringing from my lips, welcomed by a chorus of shouts from you all—'To-night the widow starving and cold, may gather her babe to her wasted bosom, moaning to God for bread, only bread—to-night, the Suicide, with Death on his brow and Hell in his breast, may tremble on the brink of the dark river, hesitating ere he takes the last fatal plunge—to-night, yes, to-night, the Mechanic, starving and mad, may rush forth from his desolate home, and gain bread for his children with the Murderer's knife ! What care we ? Are we not rich—young—the gold jingling in our pockets, the blood dancing in our veins ?' What care we for the wants and miseries of the Poor. We will have our Banquet—our Wine, huzza !' Do you remember these words, gentlemen, and yet ask me to take this money ?"

His form dilating in its full stature, he gazed upon the Students with a flashing eye and quivering lip. The mockery of his tone and look, so far from rousing any feeling of anger in the breasts of his hearers, seemed rather to bind each heart more closely to his own.

"You are a strange man, Paul !" exclaimed Blair, as he stood gazing intently upon the face of Mount-Laurel. "You doubt our sincerity—you scorn our honest impulses of good——"

All at once, the manner of this singular personage changed from the cold mockery of scorn, to the warm outburst of irrepressible feeling.

"Would you indeed, join with me in the *great work* ?" he gasped, seizing Blair's hands, and gathering them earnestly to his breast ; "Then meet me, to-morrow night—meet at the place which I name in this scroll——"

"Who are you ?" cried the Students, starting forward in a body, as every eye was fixed upon the commanding form, which towered in their midst : "Tell us your history ! Your purposes—We are yours to the death !"

While these broken ejaculations escaped from the throng, Harry Blair laid his hand upon Mount-Laurel's arm, and exclaimed in a deep whisper :

"Since the question has been started, let me repeat it ! Who are you ?"

"A POOR MAN !" And Mount-Laurel towered erect, with his chest thrown forward under his folded arms, while that look of mocking scorn again stamped the outlines of his face.

"We will meet you to-morrow night !" cried Blair. "We will join you in that great work, which now comes to us only in broken glimpses. Where shall we meet ?"

As Mount-Laurel gave his answer, his whole manner changed. His face was softened in every feature, by a mild and hallowed expression, his eye beamed a clear and steady light; his voice thrilled every heart with its deep emphasis.

"At the HOUSE OF THE NAZARENE!" he said, raising his eyes solemnly to the starlit heavens.

CHAPTER FOURTEENTH

THE PRIEST AND THE CONSPIRATORS.

"LET us take the vow!" a deep voice rung through the cellar, and the Priest arose, holding the white cross above his head, while the cowl of his dark robe fell over his face.

All was silent, not a word, not a whisper; the hard-drawn breath of twenty men, bent on a desperate deed, alone was heard.

Let us gaze upon the scene.

A gloomy cellar, spacious in extent, with the thick rafters above, the hard clay beneath. In the centre of the place, grouped in a circle, twenty men are on their knees, the light streaming warmly over each face, while at their backs, all is dim and dark.

In the centre of the group arises the dark form of the Priest, with the hooded face and uplifted cross. On one side, a muscular figure, wrapped in the thick folds of a cloak; on the other the red round cheeks and glancing eyes and thick-set form of the jovial Irishman, Peter McDavid.

Before the Priest is placed the huge pine box, with a basin, containing water, placed on its lid. A single candle of white wax, standing beside the basin, flings its beams over the faces of the kneeling men. Yonder on the opposite side, facing the Priest, you behold the iron frame of Gerald O'Brien, whose decided features, are impressed with a strange look of ferocious enthusiasm.

His form, his face, single him out, among the crowd, as the stern Genius of the scene.

Around him you behold those rude weavers, whose faces thinned and sharpened by want, now glow with a settled resolve; whose forms dwarfed or distorted by that toil, which has neither end nor hope, still manifest in every outline, the hardy vigor of their Irish blood.

"Let us take the vow!" the voice of the Priest rings through the cellar. "We swear, by the Holy Cross, to defend our Religion, to the death!"

And then, as though their voices, issued from the door of an unclosed

channel—the twenty Irishmen, repeated the words. The white Cross was passed from hand to hand; as it was pressed against each lip, the light shone over faces, distorted by the wild energy of fanaticism.

At last, passing around the circle, the cross reached O'Brien's hand. He grasped it with a clutch of iron, raised it for a moment above his head, and then pressed it to his lips, with a frenzied gesture.

"I swear"—his voice, in all its startling energy of accent, sounded as though it was torn, word by word, from his heart—"I swear by the Holy Cross, to defend my Religion, to the death!"

Then each kneeling man stooped forward, dipped his finger in the basin, and anointed his brow with holy water.

For a few brief instants, a silence, like death prevailed. Every man seemed awed, by the solemn nature of the Oath, which he had sworn on the Holy Cross, and confirmed anointing his brow with holy water.

At last the silence was broken by the deep voice of Gerald O'Brien.

"It's on next Friday, we are to strike *the blow*?"

"That's the day to a fraction, my darlint!" exclaimed the cheerful voice of Peter McDavid, whose small grey eyes, wrinkled with delight.

"Pater, I've a word to say to ye!" exclaimed O'Brien, as his keen eyes, rested upon the form of the Priest, and the cloaked figure by his side.

"Say on, my dear! It's meself that 'ill be delighted to hear you!" By way of adding emphasis to his words, he drew from his pocket, a singularly shaped black bottle, which he applied to his lips, remarking in an undertone "That was the rale cordial for a poor man's thrials and no mistake!"

"It's yerself Pater, that's the friend of the poor man," exclaimed O'Brien, with a slight touch of irony in his tone "dont you tell us how to vote at 'lection, and insense us, with the rights of things, in a ginerall way? But what was it you said your friend in the black cloak called himself anyhow?"

As O'Brien leaned forward, with a look of doubt and suspicion, darkening over his face, a deep murmur swelled from the lips of the twenty Irishmen, who knelt around the light.

"Whist, boy!" and Peter leaned forward, confidentially, "How do ye know but ye'll offend the gentleman, It's himself that's got the goold—Och! If you could only see it, piled away in his bed-room, box upon box! His name is—is—what the devil is yer name, anyhow?"

This last inquiry addressed in a low voice, to the cloak, seemed to create some little confusion in the mind of that gentleman, for veiled as he was, they could see him move uneasily to and fro, as though the hard clay burnt his knees.

"Never mind my name!" a deep voice, echoed from the folds of the cloak. "I am the friend of the Catholic and the Irishman! You may call me Patrick Barnet if you please!"

"Sure did not you hear his illoquent spache, only a moment ago?" interrupted Peter, his small grey eyes, twinkling in their sockets, like fire-coals

"Did not ye hear him pictur' the wrongs o' th' Irish poor! Och, it was illigant! Sich figures of spache and sich po'thry!"

This was touching the heart of the Irishmen on the right string. A murmur of assent echoed through the cellar.

"And this holy Father, who stands by yer side?" exclaimed O'Brien, gazing intently upon the hooded Priest.

"The Riverind Father Michael!" whispered the jovial Peter, again applying himself to the black bottle. "It's himself that's got the letters from the Bishop for what he does!"

"Av coorse he has!" murmured one of the kneeling men.

"Look at the holy wather!" cried another.

"Then why does not he show his face?" spoke the deep voice of Gerald O'Brien.

"Och! that's it! why indade!" exclaimed the others.

Did the Priest tremble as he stood there, lifting the white cross above his head? Or was it only the wind, fluttering his dark robes about his slender form? While the kneeling Irishmen awaited the answer to O'Brien's question, a hand was extended from the cloak of Patrick Barnet—as the unknown styled himself—and a voice whispered, these words in the ear of the Priest:

"Tremble—only one word of fear—and I'll send a bullet through your skull!"

And yet the hand which lifted the white cross quivered like a dry leaf.

"Och, it's makin' a judy of yerself, ye are, Gerald O'Brien!" shouted Peter, starting to his feet, with extravagant movements of his arms: "Have not ye heard the prayers of the Holy Church from the lips of Father Michael, here? Do suppose him, a born divil to place the basin o' holy wather before yer eyes, and he no Priest? Why doesn't he show his face? I tell you, man, it's necessary he should not show it, and whare's the man, that 'll call me liar!"

Peter leaned forward, his hands upraised, his eyes starting from their sockets, while his red round face, glowed like a small kettle of lighted charcoal.

"That's reasonable!" growled a huge Irishman, with a chest like an anvil, and arms like iron bars.

"To be sure it is!" cried the others. "Gerald O'Brien, listen to raison!"

"I may be a very foolish man—" exclaimed O'Brien, passing his bony hand, through his stiff grey hair—"But look ye, Peter McDavid, and look ye all, my friends, this is no time to trifle! The matter in which we stand engaged, is no child's play! For it may bring some of us to the cold graveyard—aye, I'll speak it out—perhaps to the *gallows*!"

"Be the Vargin, I didn't think of that afore!" growled one of the kneeling men, and a deep murmur ran from lip to lip.

"Look ye Pater—it's a dark bog I see before me! All I ask of you,

is this: show the way across it! No jack o' lantern lights. mind ye, but a firm way, through the darkness! That's what I ask!"

And the chest of the Irishman, began to heave, under his poor weaver's shirt. An expression of gloom came down upon every countenance; Peter McDavid alone, retained his careless jovial look.

"Is it there ye are honey?" he cried rushing forward. "Take the candle somebody, and you the basin of holy water! Off with the lid of the box! There my hearties—does that look like treason!"

A murmur of delight and surprise echoed through the dark cellar. For there, in the midst of the kneeling band, the uncovered box, displayed its treasures; rifles and muskets, placed side by side, their cold steel glittering in the light.

"Does that look like treason, I say?" shouted the triumphant Peter, "This kind gentleman in the cloak, Mister Patrick Barnet, bought this cold iron, with his own money, and look ye, my darlins, they are yours! Yours to defend yer firesides, and aving the wrongs of the Holy Catholic Church!"

Do you hear that half-muttered cry of delight, which almost deepens into a wild hurrah? Do you see these stout arms extended, each hand grasping a musket or rifle? In a moment, the light reveals the forms of twenty armed men, Gerald O'Brien, towering in their midst, the rifle in his iron grasp.

"This for the heart of the heretic!" cried one of the band, dropping a cartridge in the muzzle of his piece, "Whilaloo! Give an Irishman a good piece o' cold steel like this, an' he'd defy the devil!"

Leaning on his rifle, even as he knelt, Gerald O'Brien was silent. His bold features were an expression of deep gloom, while his dark eyes, gleaming from the shadow of his brow, shone with steady light.

"It's a rifle," he muttered, "An' the stock is mahogany mounted with silver. It cost a purty penny, I'll be bound!"

Meanwhile the Priest, still stood erect in his dark gown, the hood over his face, the cross lifted above his head.

"Be firm," whispered the cloaked figure by his side—"Not a word of fear!"

A low deep groan, echoing from the room above, quivered through every heart.

"Kathleen!" shrieked O'Brien, and with a single bound he reached the stairway, and disappeared in the darkness.

"Now, sir," whispered Peter McDavid to the cloaked figure. "You can tell me all about it? It's all right of coorse? To night, when we first met, you spoke of the Bishop's letter? Whisper low, or the men may hear—you take me?"

"It is all right!" answered the deep voice of Patrick Barnet; "I have the letters of the 'right reverend Bishop'—this Priest, Father Michael, was brought from New York for this especial purpose!"

"The gentleman was jist obsarvin'," said Peter, turning to the kneeling Irishman, "That you bether leave the arms an' the powdher, in this cellar, until *the* day! Next Friday you knew, when these dirty blackguards, hold their mob, on the lot be yonder School-House?"

"That's it Peter McDavid! We'll do that same!" was the whispered response.

"Now sir, you may be a thrue man, and you may be a thraitor," exclaimed Gerald O'Brien rushing from the darkness, "But look here!"

As he spoke, he laid the body of his dead wife on the box, her hideous face, illumined by the light, while her bared arms, hung down to the floor.

From every breast, there quivered a groan of horror and dismay at the sight. The Irishmen sprang to their feet, the Priest fell back in the arms of the cloaked Figure; for a moment all was terribly still.

There, beside the box, arose the iron form of Gerald O'Brien, his extended hand holding the candle over the face of the corpse. And the light played with her long golden hair, and shone upon her glaring eyes, and revealed her neck and bosom, spotted with the leprosy of that fearful pestilence. The sheet fell loosely about her body; it looked like a shroud, torn from the coffin, by the hand of sacrilege.

"What mane ye?" growled Peter McDavid, consoling himself with a hearty draught from the black bottle. "Is it mad ye are? To bring the body of your dead wife—dead of small-pox, as I'm a sinner—and lay it here afore us! What devil's thrick is this!"

The Irishmen gathered round, awaiting his reply in silence, while the cloaked figure, placed the Priest on his feet again, whispering his fierce warning:

"One word of fear, and I'll put this bullet in your brain!"

"What do I mane?" cried O'Brien, gazing upon the Priest, from the shadow of his brows: "This is what I mane! We are all engaged in a desperate work—it may end in death to some of us, aye, string more than one neck on the gibbet's rope! If our holy father, there, and the cloaked gentleman by his side, are thrue men, let them come forward, and prove their sincerity!"

"Prove their sincerity?" echoed the sonorous voice of Patrick Barnet, from the folds of his cloak.

While wonder—fear—horror, passed from face to face, the Irishmen awaited the result of the scene.

"Are ye indade a Priest? Then ye need not fear the dead. Advance—take the hand of the corpse within your own, and repate the Oath which I will utter!"

One hand holding the light above his head, Gerald pointed with the other to the loathsome face of the corse, while his writhing features and flashing eyes, gave evidence of the sincerity of his proposal.

"I will—not—I—" faltered the hooded Priest, and the cross which he held, fell from his hands and clattered on the hard clay.

"Look—he trembles, he falls back, he is false!" thundered O'Brien.

"A traitor!" growled the hoarse voices of the Irishmen.

"You *will*!" whispered Patrick Barnet, "Advance—or remember—the pistol-bullet!"

The Priest tottered forward—a hand was extended from his robe, but as suddenly withdrawn.

"Take the hand of the dead woman *holy* father," Gerald hissed the words between his set teeth.

"Och, this is rank blasphemy!" growled Peter, applying his lips once more to the bottle.

Again the Priest shrank back, while the brows of the Irishmen began to darken, as their hoarse murmur filled the cellar.

"Come—what do you fear!" spoke the deep tones of Patrick Barnet, as with his tall form wrapped in the cloak, he calmly advanced: "Take one hand of the dead woman—nay—" his voice sank to a hissing whisper—"If you falter we are lost! Hesitate but a moment longer, and by my soul, I swear, I will murder you with my own hand!—Come, take one hand of the dead woman—I will take the other!"

He reached forth his arm, and boldly clasped the pestilence-cankered hand of the corse, within his own. At the same moment the Priest trembled forward—extended a hand, touched the fingers of the dead, and sank back with a groan.

"Clasp the hand I say!" whispered Gerald O'Brien.

At last he seemed to gather courage; he reached forth his arm, and clasped the hand of the corse with the frenzied grasp of a drowning man, clutching a piece of floating timber.

"Now listen to the Oath!"

As the hoarse voice of O'Brien awed every heart, that dim cellar, with noisome damps trickling from its walls, the heavy rafters above, the hard clay beneath, became the scene of a dark picture.

In the centre arose the muscular form of Gerald O'Brien, the check shirt fluttering on his broad chest, one hand raising the light above his brow, the other pointing to the face of the dead.

There by his side, flung over the box, was stretched the corse, the white sheet flowing loosely round its limbs. On one side stood the unknown man, whose tall form was enveloped in a cloak, on the other the slender figure of the Priest, with the cowl dropped over his face. Each man clasped a hand of the dead within his own. The tall figure is firm; his hand does not tremble. The hand of the Priest quivers, as with the touch of a fatal disease.

Yonder slightly apart, his red round face gradually becoming as white as

the sheet which enfolds the dead woman, stands Peter McDavid, gazing on the scene in undisguised horror.

Here, around the corse, all is glaring light, but yonder in the twilight gloom, group the forms of the twenty Irishmen, each with a musquet or rifle in his grasp.

All is still, not a word disturbs the dead silence.

"Now listen to the Oath!"

Hark! As his deep voice echoes like a knell through the cellar, a light footstep resounds from the stairs. They hear it not. Every eye is centred upon the loathsome face of the dead. Look, aye, through the gloom and shadow look! Yonder, gazing on the scene with parted lips and wandering eyes, the form of a young girl steals forward on tip-toe, while her loosened hair waves freely to her shoulders.

Does she not look like a good spirit sent from the dead, to warn these men against the fearful deed, which this night they have sworn to do?

The Oath trembled on the still air.

"If I am a true man, and have spoken truth to-night, may God aid me, in all my deeds! If I a false traitor, and have spoken a lie to-night, may the hand of this dead woman impart the disease of which she died, to my hand, to my heart, to my blood! Amen!"

With a tremulous voice, the Priest repeated this Oath, his hand shaking as it clasped the cold hand of the dead.

The tall figure, enveloped in the thick folds of his cloak, repeated it, word for word, with a deep and solemn intonation. The hand which grasped the hand of the dead, was firm as iron.

As that hand was withdrawn, the cloak for a single instant, fell aside, from the face of Patrick Barnet, and the same light which illumined the leprous countenance of the dead, bathed with its red glare, the cold glassy eye, and sneering lip of CALVIN WOLFE.

CHAPTER FIFTEENTH.

THE CARDINAL PRINCE.

OUT on the Ocean at dead of night, the universe of stars above, the world of waves below!

Yes, the course of our Revelations, leads us from the old city of William Penn, yonder to the dark Ocean—then through the scenes of a strange and wondrous history—then to the awful image, baptized by the memories of a thousand years, steeped in the gloom of uncounted ages, the awful image,

now, breaks into the sky, * grand with Colosseum, Catacombs and Cathedral—to ROME !

First, upon the waters !

In the same hour, that Paul Mount-Laurel pleaded the cause of gilded crime, with Nora the weaver's child, a solitary boat, floated on the broad bosom of the Atlantic, tossed gently to and fro, by the tremulous waves.

At the same moment, that CALVIN WOLFE, the Pope of the Holy Protestant League, in the den of the Conspirators pressed the hand of the dead woman, and repeated a blasphemous Oath, this solitary boat, tossing over the tremulous waves of the Atlantic, bore on, to the fearful death of starvation, three persons, a Preacher with grey hairs, a Woman with darkly flowing tresses, a Priest with a tonsured brow.

Yonder, over the waste of waters, a crescent of pale gold, rises slowly into view. It is the new moon soft and beautiful, as a Virgin, just trembling on the threshold of the world. Rising from the waves, it fills the sky, with a mild and tender light ; it flings a column of quivering radiance, far over the sea, and over the solitary boat, tossing gently to and fro.

That column of moonbeams, lights up the faces of the Doomed.

Let us look within the boat, and mark the slow agonies of starvation, that most terrible of all deaths, which tears the body, inch by inch, from the palpitating soul.

It is a miserable boat, a mere wreck, not twenty feet in length, blackened almost into cinders by fire, on one side, beaten and broken by the waves, on the other.

And through the broken side, the waves beat slowly in, and cover the bottom of the boat.

Yonder, in the stern crouches the Preacher, his hollow cheek, resting on his clenched hands, his elbows placed upon his knees. From his bared forehead, his grey hairs, float in the gentle air ; from the shadow of his gathered eyebrows, his grey eyes, glare madly on the deep waves. His dark coat is torn in many places, along the breast it bears the marks of fire ; the cravat which encircles his withered neck, was once white and spotless ; now it is but a dingy rag. The traces of terrible suffering are written upon every inch of his slender form ; the light of famine and madness, glares from his sunken eyes.

In the bow of the boat, not crouching and cowering as though affraid of Night and Death, but stern and erect, as though looking his iron Destiny, formly in the face, sits the Priest, his hands resting on his knees, his dark eyes, gazing fixedly upon the rising moon. Around that brow, so massive, thrown boldly into view, by the hollowed cheeks and withered face, a circle of dark curls float with a waving motion. The dark eyes, dilated by famine, seemed to fill the space, between the cheek-bone and the brow ; his lips are compressed over his clenched teeth ; the entire face, and

brow, with the bones starting through the olive skin, wears an aspect, at once horrible and deathly.

The dark robe, which falls in thick folds, from his broad shoulders to his bared feet, reveals a powerful frame, worn to a skeleton by famine.

Such were the Preacher and Priest, but the third figure, sitting in the centre of the boat? A woman!

A woman, who has once been beautiful, and even now in this dread hour of famine and death, wears about her darkly flowing hair, and dazzling eyes and bared bosom, some traces of that gorgeous loveliness, peculiar to the daughters of Palestine, from immemorial time.

The arms folded over her bared bosom are white and round; the thin robe, whose scanty folds flutter from that bosom to her knees, reveal some glimpses of a form, which famine has failed to despoil of voluptuous warmth and glowing outlines; the hair, which dark as the night the moment before the dawn arises, falls in heavy masses, glistening with ocean-spray, from the brow to the waist, winds around a neck and shoulders, as beautiful as alabaster, warmed by the first glow of the summer sun.

In fine, looking upon the shipwrecked woman, who sits there silent and uncomplaining, her face bathed in the light of the rising moon, you are at once reminded of the tender and heroic daughter of Jephtha, or the warm and glowing Bathsheba, or the wild and lascivious Herodia, who danced before King Herod, in the days of old, her white arms, raising the gory head of the Prophet, above her raven hair.

And the night wears on, and the moon arises, yet still that silent woman sits uncomplaining there, while the Preacher utters a low cry of anguish and the Priest gazes fixedly upon the sky, his lips moving tremulously, as he murmurs words of strange meaning.

And the same moonbeam, that lights up the hollow cheeks of the Preacher, the olive visage of the Priest, reveals the warm beauty, of the silent woman.

Behold the strange mysteries of human life!

Only thirty days ago, and this Preacher stood face to face with the Queen of Great Britain, his grey eye firing with fanatical rapture, as he received a great and at the same time, wonderful commission, from the hands of Royalty itself!

Only forty days ago, and the Priest, knelt before the Pope of Rome, while the clouds of incense waving about his head, the thunder of the organ, swelling through the dome of St. Peter's, seemed to consecrate the mission, he was about to undertake; a high and holy mission to the far land of the New World.

Only twenty-five days ago, and this Woman, now sitting so calm and serene, while Death and starvation, hover in the air, ready to banquet upon the unveiled loveliness of her bosom, shone from the stage of a Parisian

theatre, in all the majesty of genius and beauty, her every word and gesture, watched by the eager eyes of applauding thousands.

And now they are here upon the broad bosom of the waters, brought together by some strange decree of Fate—a frail boat quivering between them and Eternity—the Preacher, Priest, and Woman.

It was when the Crescent Moon parting from the horizon, like a Bride from the threshold of home, sailed serenely in the deep blue sky, her mild beams hallowing the universe of waves and sky with a sad and tender light, that the Preacher started to his feet, and scanned the face of the deep. Passing his withered hand through his grey hairs, he turned from side to side, the boat rocking beneath him, while his glaring eyes drank in the boundless prospect.

In a moment, as though exhausted by the effort, he sank upon the boat again, and muttered in a voice husky with famine:

“No sail, no hope!”

Then while his bared feet rested in the water, which filled the bottom of the boat, he sank his head between his hands, and tried to frame a Prayer to his God. But Famine was gnawing at his heart and glaring from his eyes; his prayer died away in a curse. Yes, this Minister of Heaven, who would have been torn to pieces with hot irons, rather than deny his faith, now when the slow agonies of starvation were rending him inch by inch from life, clenched his hands against his forehead, and blasphemed his God.

As the curse trembled from his lips, the Priest arose with evident effort, and stood unsteadily upon the bow of the boat, his face turned to the west, his white hands lifted above his head.

“It is there!” he murmured, in a voice unnaturally wild and hollow; “There beyond the waves, the land of the New World! There is death at my heart, fever in my veins, madness in my brain, yet I will not die, till I reach its shores!”

And in the delirium of the moment, he waved his hands toward the west, as if to embrace the invisible shores, while his eye kindled with a fire that seemed like the last glow of a strong soul, about to be darkened in the night of death.

As he stands in the bow of the rocking boat, the moonbeam streams over his tall form, with the black robe falling from the shoulders, and lights up the bold forehead now glowing with a deep enthusiasm.

Even as his eye glares with that strange fire, he sinks down again into a sitting posture, biting his nether lip until the blood comes, in the vain effort to forget the gnawings of hunger. Still no thought of blasphemy is at his heart, no word of despair upon his tongue.

And all the while the beautiful Woman in the centre of the boat—her dark mantle saturated with spray, resting under her feet—gathers the thin robe to her form with folded arms, as the wind plays with her hair, and the moon streams over her bosom. Still no word of murmur passes her lip;

her eyes beam with steady light; the tooth of famine that brings the curse from the Preacher's tongue; the blood from the lip of the Priest, tears no groan, not even a sigh from the bosom of this half-clad woman.

The Preacher starts to his feet again, totters along the boat, and passing the woman sinks down beside the Priest, who regards him with a smile of wonder mingled with scorn.

"Ten days on the water, in this miserable boat—" the Preacher whispered in the husky voice of Famine; "Four days without food—I tell ye man I will stand it no longer!"

The Priest regarded him with a long and searching glance of scorn:

"Die then!" was his hoarse response.

"I am but human—I tell you, I can endure it no longer!" the Preacher exclaimed, his voice becoming wild and shrill—"I've a wife—two children, waiting my return, yonder in America. And yet—God forgive me—at this moment, I could sacrifice my wife, my children, to obtain a piece of bread!"

He clenched his hands together, and bending forward, glared in the Priest's face, as though his very soul hung on his reply.

"O, sir, you are very kind!" exclaimed the Priest, in a voice marked with an Italian accent; "Only ten days ago, and you were too holy—too much a Christian to waste a look on the—*Catholic Priest!*"

"But the days of suffering we have passed together!" And the Preacher crouched nearer to the side of the Priest: "Ten days on the ocean—four without a crust of bread!"

"Have you forgotten that scene so soon? At the dead of night the cry of Fire! rang through the ship—startled the crew and passengers from their beds—the deck was crowded by one hundred frightened wretches, who gazed upon the mass of flame, and alternately blessed and blasphemed their God! You were among that crowd—do you remember your words when the Catholic Priest rushed below, to save the life of a person who had been left to perish in the cabin? That person an actress and a *Jewess*? The raft—hastily built—quivered beside the burning ship—passengers—crew—all were ready to embark, when the Captain's voice was heard—My God! he shrieked in agony, we have left two persons to perish in the flames! 'Never mind,' was the response of a holy man, 'It is only the Jewess, and the—*Popish Priest!*' That voice was yours!"

"The Captain enraged by my words, pushed the raft from the burning ship, and left me to perish in the flames—" The Preacher shuddered as he uttered these words in a hollow whisper—"You appeared on deck, bearing the Jewess in your arms, and——"

"Saved you!" exclaimed the Priest, his wasted cheek flushing with scorn—"Yes, dragged this boat from the midst of the flames—stored it with such provisions as the terror of that moment permitted me to procure—and then, invited you to take your seat between the Jewess and the—*Catholic Priest!*"

He folded his arms over his breast, and moved from the Preacher's side, as though his touch was pollution.

"But you will forget the Past—" whined the miserable wretch, cringing nearer to the side of the man who scorned him—"Here we have been four long days, four dreary nights without a crust of bread. For two days and nights, we have been without water—I tell ye man, that I can bear it no longer!"

"Die then!"

"One of us must die."

"What mean you?"

"Men in our position, forsaken by Earth and Heaven, must not be fastidious. We must cast lots; you and I and the Jewish woman. The one on whom the lot falls, must die to save the others' lives!"

The Priest was silent. Had these frenzied words stricken some dark chord at his heart? Placing his attenuated hand against his broad forehead, he rested his elbow on his knee, and gazed intently into the bottom of the boat.

At this moment the Jewess, who was seated with her back towards these men, turned her face over her shoulder and silently surveyed them. There was a strange beauty about her face even in that moment of peril, when a demoniac thought was slowly working its way, through the hearts of Priest and Preacher.

The white shoulder against which her chin rested; the long hair dark and flowing, each glossy wave silvered by the moonlight; the eyes gleaming a calm deep light from the shadow of the eyelashes; that face, so serenely yet warmly beautiful, even as its glance surveyed the ominous visages of the desperate men—it was a sight of strange loveliness centred there, in the midst of the desolate waters and midnight sky. The Priest raised his eyes—encountered her gaze and shuddered.

"That face haunts me like a thing of Evil omen," he murmured, turning his eyes away: "I have seen it before this awful calamity—where I know not!"

As he sank back into his thoughts again, the Preacher clutched him by the arm, exclaiming in that harsh and unnatural voice:

"We are starving to death. There is no time to lose. Come—decide quickly!"

Still the Priest was silent; the light of the rising moon streamed over his brow, and revealed the dark Thought which was silently possessing his soul.

At last he spoke, yes, turning his wasted face toward the Preacher who shrank back appalled from the ominous glare of his eyes, he exclaimed in deep and deliberate tones:

"We will cast lots! Let Almighty God decide—One of us must die to save the others' lives!"

In the agony of the moment, he pressed his lip between his teeth, and a

single blood-drop oozed slowly from the withered skin. The taste of blood seemed to act upon him, as it would upon a famished beast.

"Be merciful to me! Be merciful to me!" he cried, raising his clasped hands to Heaven. "I am mad, I am mad! A river of blood flows there, there before my eyes—my ears are deafened by the gurgling of its gory waves! And here, must my great work come to an end, here, upon the dark waters, in a scene of hideous Murder!"

Again the Jewess turned and gazed upon him. She uttered no word, yet the light of her large eyes seemed to fire his blood.

He gazed in her face for a single instant, and then bowing his head upon his breast, murmured in a half audible whisper:

"I have seen that face in Rome! When, I know not—where, I can only guess! For ten days and nights, she has been silent—not a word from her lips—and yet her eyes speak to my soul, like the awful voice of Destiny!"

Meanwhile the Jewess turned her face to the moon again, and the night-breeze tossed her luxuriant hair aside from her shoulders and bosom.

"How shall we cast lots?" whispered the Preacher, his contorted features expressing a hideous despair.

The Priest made no reply, but silently drew from the folds of his gown a letter, from whose envelope he tore three strips of paper, precisely alike in shape and appearance. Then taking a pencil from his robe, by the faint light of the moon, he wrote on the first strip the word—*Murder*—on second—*Life*—on the third—*DEATH*. All the while his lip quivered, and his large full eye grew wilder in its light.

At last—while the Preacher watched his movements with quivering anxiety, and the Jewess sat with her face and bosom bared to the moon—he stooped into the darkness of the boat, and drew an object from the waters which covered its bottom.

It was his priestly cap, saturated and dripping with water.

"Let Almighty God decide between us!" he exclaimed, in hollow tones, "Behold! I place these strips of paper in the cap, let each one extend a hand, and at the same moment decide the question—Who shall die to save the others lives? And also—Who shall be the Executioner?"

With trembling hands, the Preacher raised the three strips of paper to his very eyes, and by the faint light, perused their fatal words. Then he silently passed them to the Jewess, who gazed upon them with that singular smile, which was wont to gleam over her face, its calm self-possession vividly contrasted with the despair of the Preacher, the stern horror of the Priest.

Turning her head over her shoulder, she dropped the lots in the cap, which the Priest extended in his left hand.

Then, all was silent. You could hear the waves plashing against the

sides of the boat, you could hear the deep-drawn breath of the Preacher; the heavy gaspings of the Priest, but all beside was still.

At a sign from the Jewess, each one extended a hand, grasped a strip of paper from the cap, and while that same ominous silence prevailed, they read their doom by the pale moonbeams.

For the first time, the Jewess spoke; her voice, so terribly calm, thrilled the Priest with an unknown fear.

"DEATH!" she exclaimed, and crumpled the paper between her fingers.

"Life!" gasped the Priest, a gleam of involuntary joy darting from his dark eyes.

"Murder!" shrieked the Preacher, starting from his seat, while his entire face glowed with an expression as sudden as it was infernal. "Yes—I am the Executioner! You are the Doomed!"

He towered erect, the veins swelling from his bared throat, as the light fell over his writhing features, sharpened by want, distorted by despair.

He rushed forward, clutched the long dark hair of the woman, in his nervous grasp, and by one sudden effort, attempted to hurl her from the boat, into the sea.

The Priest, unable to endure the horror of that sight, concealed his face in the folds of his robe.

"Come—the lot has fallen upon you.—You must die!"

He wound those luxuriant tresses about his arms; her head fell back upon his breast; the beauty of her face lay there, before him, deepened and mel-
lowed by the silver light.

She looked up; her dark eyes were fixed upon his face, in a sad, uncom-
plaining look.

"I will hurl you from the boat. Yes, I will sink you in the waters!" cried the Preacher, with the voice and look of a madman. "Your bosom is fair, your form beautiful, but you must die. Die to save my life, die, so that I may feast upon your form, your bosom—die, in order that I may live to accomplish my great mission!"

He dragged her from the seat, toward the side of the boat. She made no resistance; the thin garment fluttered around her voluptuous shape; her arms, round and white and lovely, even in that moment of famine hung list-
lessly by her side. Not a word from her lips, not a sigh from her bosom.

With the rude grasp of a madman, he dragged her from the seat, he held her head over the side of the boat, her long hair fell waving, partly into the waters, partly into the lap of the Priest.

At that moment, as she hung trembling on the side of the boat, the Priest raised his head and beheld her. At the sight, his wan features flushed with burning crimson, the wild glare of his large eyes was subdued by a look of unutterable agony.

She lay there before him, her limbs bared even to the knee, resting on the bench, her body pressed against the side, her head almost touching his knee,

Above her, clutching each white shoulder with a madman's grasp, towered the Preacher, his grey eye dilating, his nostrils quivering with the frenzy of despair.

This strangely beautiful woman gazed in the face of the Priest, and murmured with a sad smile:

"You are starving. Ere morning you will be dead. The blood in my veins will give you life. Remember, O, Remember your great Mission to the New World, and kill me!"

As though a serpent had bit his heel, the Priest started from the seat.

"Where—" he cried, with a flushed cheek and blazing eye—"Where have I seen that face, where have I heard that voice?"

"Take the dagger and kill me!"

And as she spoke, she drew from the shadows of the boat, a slender blade of steel, with a handle fashioned in the shape of a skeleton arm, moulded of yellow gold.

"Woman you madden me! There is a fire in your look that frenzies my blood—a tone in your voice that takes my soul from my bosom! Yet, that look, that voice, bring home to my heart, the great duty of my life. It is yonder—" and he turned to the western sky, with a strange enthusiasm in his voice and eye—"It is yonder, far over the waves, that beautiful land, which God has set apart, as the last and holiest altar of his Church. I must stand upon its shores within three days; my life is not my own. For, yonder, even now, the Church is in danger, yonder, even now, the elements of death and ruin are at work, yonder — aye, famine-stricken and shipwrecked as I am, I behold it—yonder, the Cross gleams over waves of flame, gleams from the dome of the temple—it totters—it falls! Hark! How the shout of the scoffer and blasphemer thunders into the midnight sky!"

He stood on the prow of the boat, his face blazing as with delirium, turned to the west, while his quivering hands were lifted above his head. It was evident that while his body had been weakened and worn by intense suffering, his soul had grown into a strange and fearful activity. There was a light in his dark eyes, like the gleam hovering over the eyes of the death-stricken. The muscles of his face were contracted; the lips compressed, the brows darkened in a frown, which gave a deeper glare to his fixed eyeballs.

"Yes," he muttered, "She must die, to save my life! There is a voice within me, which tells me, I must attain yonder shore within three days, or else sacrifice the great object of my journey!"

"The lot has fallen upon her, and she must die!" growled the Preacher. "This is no time to waste in idle words. *Death*—was written on the paper—and *Death*—is her portion, and by my hand!"

And the moonlight streamed over his withered countenance, as it glowed with all the horror of an infernal desire. The contracted mouth, the sunken cheeks, the forehead with its scattered grey hairs, and the glassy eyes with

their fixed glare, all manifested the bestial appetite which had possessed his soul.

And as he bent over his victim—this strange woman, whom we have seen retaining a wild and dazzling loveliness, even amid scenes of starvation, that would chill a man's blood, to picture—as with a terrible resolve on his lip, a fearful light in his eye, he bent over his victim, pressing his rude grasp on each shoulder, eager and hungry for an act of loathsome murder.—

At this moment, let us look yonder over three hundred miles of ocean and land, into the temple-walls of yonder New England church, where clustered around the altar, we may behold the peaceful congregation of men and women and children, waiting for the coming of their Preacher.

And here upon the ocean, stricken by famine and madness, that Preacher stands, bending over the body of the doomed woman.

Meanwhile, wrapped in his own sombre thoughts, the Priest, gazed vacantly upon the face of the Jewess, who lay at his feet, her face mellowed by a look of voluptuous languor.

The dagger was in his hand; his lip and eye, the one compressed, the other steadily glaring, betokened the desperation of his purpose, as he bent down over the prostrate woman, his face almost touching the visage of the Preacher.

The moon shed a sad and sepulchral light over the scene.

The waves beat with a mournful cadence against the sides of the boat.

The night breeze played with the long tresses of her hair, casting its dark luxuriance almost into the faces of the starving men.

Still, she looked up smilingly, still that warm glance, softened by dewy moisture, shone into their darkened faces.

"You must die!" whispered the Priest, and his broad forehead flushed with an enthusiasm, that was almost sublime—"You, my evil Genius, you, my Fate, whose voice thrills, whose eyes burn me, must die, and by my hand!"

As the knife was clenched in his right hand, the Jewess extended her arms with a sudden and almost imperceptible movement. That knife rose in the moonlight, gleaming like a star; it fell with a hissing sound, but the bosom of the Jewess was not there to receive the murderer's blow. For at the same moment that she extended her hands, she started to her feet, hurled the Preacher aside, and stood erect on the stern of the boat, her silken robe fluttering round her form, from the bosom to the knees, while her hair streamed in one dark mass from her shoulders to her waist. In each extended hand she grasped a packet, which she slowly waved to and fro, while her voice rung on the midnight air:

"This is a holy man of God!" she cried, with a laugh of scorn. "He hungers, he thirsts, and lo! He would commit a deed of cowardly murder, so that he might appease his hunger, quench his thirst, with the still warm blood, the still palpitating body of an assassinated woman. Oh, shudder, and

cringe if you will, but it is true! This—" and she pointed to the Priest—
 "This is a noble Cardinal Prince! Ha, ha, ha! He would hasten to the New World; aye, he would plant the Cross of his Church high upon the awful mountains of that land—deep within its lovely vallies. Consecrated to the great work by the sacred hands of the Pope, he hastens from Rome, he embarks for the New World, his eye all fire, his heart all zeal, and now behold him! Here, upon the dark ocean, the murderer's knife in his hand, here, transformed by a burning thirst, a maddening hunger, into a very Devil!"

And her laugh broke startlingly on the air, while she waved the packets slowly to and fro. The Priest shrank back aghast; his face was pale before, but now it was livid. The Preacher trembled, as the boat rocked beneath him, trembled with fear and awe. There was something strange in the spectacle of that half-clad woman, defying the despair of two starving men, and laughing their agony to scorn.

"You behold these packets? Even as you bent over me, I seized them from your breasts. This from yours, my good Preacher—it bears the superscription "*The Duke of * * * * Grand Master of the L. P. O. in the British Empire, sends these presents, greeting, to Calvin Wolfe; Grand Master of the L. P. O. on the Continent of America.*" Shall I toss this packet into the water? What say you, my friend?"

The Preacher uttered a deep groan. His countenance was stamped with an agony deeper even than the despair of shipwreck and famine.

"Do not—do not for the sake of God, destroy or injure that packet!" he shrieked, starting forward with clasped hands.

"And you, my priestly friend, hold this packet in high esteem? Look—it bears a heavy seal; the arms of his Holiness the Pope! The superscription "*To the Cardinal Prince, our Legate on the Continent of America!*" A world of meaning in that single line! Shall I bury it beneath the waves forever?"

The Priest heard her tone of laughing scorn, he felt the light of her wild dark eyes, shooting a strange magnetic ray, even to his heart and brain, yet he darted forward, exclaiming with a deep emphasis:

"Take my life; but do not destroy that parchment!"

Then his noble brow flushed; his sunken cheeks warmed; even beneath the voluminous folds of his robe, you could see his attenuated form quiver with emotion.

They bent down together over the central bench, their knees in the water, while, with clasped hands, they besought the Jewess to return these important parchments, strange in their superscriptions, and cumbrous in their seals.

And yet the Jewess stood there, erect, on the stern of the boat, preserving her balance, with mingled grace and ease, as the fragile bark quivered beneath her, while the breeze bore her hair aside from her bosom, in long

streaming masses, and fluttered the silken robe, until it gathered in easy folds around her queenly form.

Still she stood there, her dark eyes upraised, her white arms folded across her motionless bosom.

The Priest raised his glance, and shuddered as he beheld the expression of deep emotion which passed over her face.

The Preacher gazed for a moment upon the warm voluptuous beauty of her half uncovered form, and veiled his face in his hands.

"It is no human being—" he muttered, with a mad glare in his grey eyes, "but a spirit, come to haunt our dying hour!"

"Who are you?" gasped the Priest, in a tone of fierce entreaty—"I tell you, woman, when I see you, my soul warms—freezes—trembles, by turns, as though I stood in the presence of my Fate. You are but a woman—a beautiful woman, it is true, whose limbs are moulded with a warm passionate loveliness, whose white bosom heaves under the dark hair, like mountain snow beneath a midnight cloud—but still a woman! And yet I have seen an expression come gradually over your face, which made me think I beheld not a living being, but a ghost from the dead. Yes, I have seen a fire in your eye, that reminded me of that awful night—even now, amid starvation and despair, I shudder at the memory—that awful night—"

"The night in the Catacombs of Rome!" said the low musical voice of the Jewess.

"Ah! You were there! It was you that—but hold! By the despair of a dying man, I implore you, speak—Who are you?"

"A poor Jewess—a public dancer!" And she languidly raised her white arms, burdened with the dark masses of her flowing hair—"You beheld me, in the theatres of Naples and Rome!"

"Ah—you mock me! The night in the Catacombs——"

He was interrupted by a howl of anguish from the Preacher—

"Oh, God, for a crust of bread, a drop of water!"

The unspeakable agony of famine, which degrades man into a beast and devil, burned in his veins. He clenched his hands, and beat his forehead against the seat. The Priest heard his cry of agony, and pressed his hands nervously against his breast.

"I burn, I burn!" he faintly groaned, and then re-echoed the cry of the Preacher—"O, God, for a crust of bread, a drop of water!"

"You hunger and thirst," said the Jewess, calmly: "Take this key. It unlocks a small chest, which you will find concealed in the stern of the boat."

"What mean you?" exclaimed the Priest, with a look of vacant wonder.

"Take the key, and search beneath the loose canvass, in the stern of the boat, and you will find the chest."

The Priest started forward, and in a moment dragged from beneath the seat on which the Jewess stood, a small chest, not more than two feet square, and secured by a heavy padlock.

CHAPTER SIXTEENTH.

THE WANDERING JEWESS. FIRST ERA. PALESTINE. A. D. 30.

FAR away into the shadows of ages, on a glowing summer's day, with skies of Palestine above us, her fruits and flowers around, we will enter the Palace of the Great King.

In a dim luxurious chamber, festival lights odorous with the spices of the east, flung their softened beams over the faces of the birthday guests.

Ten massive pillars formed of dark marble and sculptured with images of mirth and love, supported the wide ceiling. From each pillar hung a silver lamp, flinging its light and incense far along the chamber. Curtains of Tyrian purple hung between the pillars, shutting the daylight from the scene. One curtain alone gently parted, gave entrance to a single gleam of sunshine, which fell over the faces of the guests in a slender line of gold. Through the crevice of that curtain you might behold the domes of the wide city, the Temples rising over all, their pinnacles glittering in the light like living gold, the massive outlines of the gloomy prison, nay, the far-spreading country with its hills crowned with palms, lay there beneath the summer sun, like a Bride beneath her lover's gaze. And the sea was there, environed by mountains, and sparkling in its ten thousand waves with light; reflecting the blue, sky it rippled softly on its palm-darkened shores, the sea of Galilee.

Shouts of the millions too, yelling through the streets and alleys of the city, the praise of the Great King, came hoarsely through the curtains of that festival chamber.

And here, their faces dimly revealed by the perfumed lights, were clustered the birthday guests. Each one reclining on his couch at the foot of a dark pillar, received from the hands of the Nubian slave, at his side, the goblet of gold, gleaming with ruddy wine. The goblets had been emptied, an hundred times, fruits from the far east served on salvers of gold, had increased the fiery thirst of the guests, the feast began to warm into a revel.

In the centre of that scene, reclining on a couch of purple and gold which was elevated above all the others, as a Throne is raised above the heads of millions, the KING lifted his goblet aloft and his voice hoarse with wine, thrilled deeply through the hall.

"Libation," he shouted, "Libation to the united Gods of Rome and Israel!"

For a moment, even as the goblet was placed to his lips, he bent from his couch, anxious to glean the sentiments of his guests from their faces.

A cresset hung on the dark pillar overhead, lighted his face with a mild radiance.

His dark brow seamed with the wrinkles of crime more than care, over-arched darker eyes hollowed by long nights of revelry. His perfumed beard flowing to his breast in rich dark masses, could not hide the cold cruelty of his smile, nor did his robes of fine linen relieved by heavier vestments of purple, turn your eye from the sated apathy of his countenance. He reclined there in the dim light, a Great King, whose thirst for human blood had been slaked by the sacrifice of thousands in battle, whose brutal appetite for woman's charms, had been gratified in the ruin of the fairest daughters of Galilee.

"Libation," he re-echoed, "Libation to the united Gods of Rome and Israel!"

The first to answer his shout was a grave man, clad in the robes of the Judean priesthood, with the broad parchment inscribed with characters from the Book of Moses, bound around his brow.

"Libation!" he shouted, "to Jehovah and Jupiter!" He emptied the goblet and wiped the red drops which trickled over its brim, from his snow-white beard.

"Let fanatics rave," cried a Pharisee portly in form and ruddy in visage "Concerning the pure law of Moses, and the wrong that we commit upon our fathers' memory, by owning the sway of a Foreign Prince! I am faithful to Moses, and I deem his law best followed by mingling his rites with the rites of Rome, by linking his holy name with the name of our great King! Then drink we all—Libation to the Gods of Israel and Rome—libation to the names of Moses the Prophet, and Herod the King!"

The hall rang with its shout, uttered in one swelling chorus, "Herod the King! Moses the Prophet! All hail!—All hail the Gods of Israel and Rome!"

"As for me," mumbled a purple-faced voluptuary, whose robe glittering with gems from the shoulder to the feet, indicated the Senator, "I am not particular about my Gods, so that they are lovers of mirth and wine! Moses and Bacchus forever—all hail!"

Herod gazed in silence along the hall. He beheld the warriors of Rome, with their martial armour changed for holiday robes of silk and purple, the Senators in their flowing togas, the voluptuous sons of the Roman nobility, lapped in garments, heavy with jewels and gold, mingled with the proud Pharisee, the epicurean Saduccee, the consecrated Priest of Jerusalem. It was a strange and various crowd, gathered in that dim hall, to celebrate the birth-day of our king.

Herod's pale face, livid on the lips and cheeks with the ravages of libertine excess, glowed with sudden rapture, his eyes, dim and hollow, fired with a strange lustre.

"What care we for Religions?" he shouted, as the hideous Nubian filled his goblet afresh; "are not all alike? All alike preach the doctrine, 'the Rich must be rulers, the Poor must be slaves!' Jehovah and Jupiter

alike are the Gods of the Rich; the Priests of both bow down at altars of Gold!* The poor—who even heard of their having a—God? By the body of Bacchus! Let Religion flourish, say we, so long as when various forms she tells the same old story—*King thou art born to trample—slave, thou art born to be trampled!*”

Again the hall rang with laughter and shouts.

“He is witty, our king!” said the warrior, leaning forward with an unsteady motion, as he held his goblet to the Nubian, “Great as Cæsar and witty as Mercury!”

“But King, there are those, lately arisen, who doubt this truth,” said the white-bearded Priest, with a mocking smile; “For example, the common people of Jerusalem, look for a Deliverer, who shall lift them from the dust! Yes—it brings the smile to your face—they look for a Messiah, who shall make the *poor man*, the miserable slave of the palace, the workshop and the mine, equal to the proudest King, who wears the Roman purple!”

The laughter redoubled, but Herod’s brow grew dark. Those words around a bitter memory in his soul.

“There is one who announces the coming of the Messiah,” he said in a deep voice, with an absent glance, “A stern-looking man, with a long thick beard, a grave countenance hardened by the desert sun, a poor raiment of skins bound to his waist by a leathern girdle—”

“I remember him, a miserable fanatic”—exclaimed the Pharisee. “He is named”—began the Priest.

“Silence all! Dare not breathe his name!” fiercely exclaimed Herod, “Do I not remember the day, when attired as he was in an outcast’s rags, he strode unto our Palace, and before our very Throne, environed as we were by guards, he proclaimed these words in our ears, ‘Herod the King, thou hast taken to thy bosom, the wife of thy brother, the granddaughter of thy father! In the law of Jehovah, thy crime is known by the names of ADULTERY and INCEST!’”

“He spoke this to thee? To thee the King?” thundered the Senator. “Aye, by Jupiter! To me, the sun-darkened fanatic spoke thus! But I took sudden vengeance on him. My guards hurled him from the hall, he shall rot within the prison walls he shall——Look you Priest, can the dead arise?” he shouted, while that red flush faded from his cheek, and a strange glare lighted his cold eyeballs. “Does your religion teach, that your Prophets long since dead, rise from their graves, in new forms, and walk the earth, clad with supernatural power?”

“In one view our faith does teach this truth”—the Priest began.

As he spoke a calm-faced Saducee, half-rose from his couch, and said with a smile of mockery:

* The author it is needless to state, does not endorse this sentiment, in reference to the Jehovah of the Christian.

"These three things are necessary to accomplish the rising of the dead. When the mountains walk to the sea, when the Jordan flows to its source, when the sun shines by night, and the stars give light by day—Then will the dead arise and not before!"

"Cold-hearted infidel!" replied the Priest, emptying his goblet in wrath, "You have never read our law, but with eyes of clay! Our Prophets do arise, they do walk the earth, they do assume new forms——"

"Then," said Herod, shading his eyes with his hands, "This—man—whom I have cast into prison, maybe one of the Prophets of old"——

"Not so, great Prince! For did the Prophets return, is it reasonable to suppose that they would come in coarse garments, arrayed like the humblest wretch, who toils in the workshop and the mine?"

A wild burst of laughter shook the hall.

"An excellent idea, by the body of Bacchus," shouted the Senator, "Did the Prophets return they would come in cleanly garments, hung with jewels and gold, like persons of delicate taste? Our priestly friend is right by Jove!"

The cloud passed from the brow of Herod.

"More wine! Darken the curtains slave, and let the light grow dim! We will prolong our revel until the stars come forth—aye until they grow pale again, before the lights of day!"

Suddenly a faint sound of music, rippling in waves of melody, came thrilling through that curtained hall. The King started on his couch; the guests, with one moment, raised their heads. Near and nearer it drew that burst of melody, until the wide hall echoed as with the notes of a thousand birds.

Presently a purple curtain that hung between two massive pillars, was withdrawn, and two female slaves, whose dark limbs, glittered with bracelets of gold, appeared in the hall, holding torches in their hands.

They slowly advanced, waving their torches above their heads.

Then came a band of Jewish maidens, clad in flowing white, with their dark hair, confined by cincture of pearls and gold. Striking the tabret, the lyre and the lute, with their white hands, they came softly on, while their delicious music, filled the air, like a Divine Presence.

The guest were spell-bound. Leaning on one arm they bent over their couches, listening in rapt attention, even in that hour of drunken revelry to those entrancing sounds.

Silently the dark female slaves, bearing torches, took position before the couch of Herod. Silently the Jewish maidens, ranged on either side, their instruments of music, girdled by their round white arms.

Then their sounds of boisterous melody, sank into a low faint tremulous air, like the flowing of a distant river over its bed of rocks.

The curtains opened once more, and with one bound the King started upright on the couch. One cry quivered from the lips Herod and the guests:

‘HERODIA!’

And a form, veiled in one long and shapeless robe of dark purple reaching from the shoulders to the feet, came gently over the marble floor. Her dark hair was neatly wound aside, from her young countenance; her snowy neck, her white feet, unconfined by sandals, her alabaster hands, unclasped by rings, appeared from the folds of her robe, distinctly relieved by its intense darkness of hue.

She came gently on, with her lids half-closed, the long lashes resting on her cheek, the eyes cast on the floor. A faint red flush burned in the centre of each cheek, while her lips, soft and warm and pouting, were subdued in a timid smile. Gathering that shapeless robe about her form, with her fair white hands, she silently advanced, as though afraid to raise her eyes from the floor.

At last she stood before the King. She raised her eyes. That silent glance held him mute with speechless admiration. The guests still leaned over their couches, gazing in silent earnestness upon her muffled form.

Then with a gentle motion, she unloosed the brooch that gathered the heavy purple to her shoulders. It floated from her, that dark robe, slowly, gently; they saw her white shoulders, her bosom scarce hidden by the pressure of an azure vest, her form around whose flowing outlines, waved in easy folds, a skirt of damask purple, edged with a border of pearls; From the slender waist to the knees it reached, this gorgeous tunic. From the knees downward, her limbs were bared to the light, in all their faultless grace.

One shout of wonder and admiration resounded through the hall. She stood there, in the centre of the floor, with the folds of the dark mantle resting negligently on the marble around her feet.

Then, clasping her arms—full, round, and white as alabaster, they were bared to the light—over her bosom, she bent her head, and in the action, her dark hair, escaping from the cincture, fell in one shower of midnight darkness, even to her feet.

She stood there, veiled in her luxuriant hair.

That sight maddened the blood of the King. Panting with mute admiration, with passion, he leaned over his couch and perused the loveliness of her cheeks, her lips, the voluptuous outline of her form, the strange witchery of her glance, with gloating eyes.

The guests did not speak an audible word; admiration, wonder, delight had stolen their tongues.

Herodia raised her white hands and gently parted the dark tresses from her face. Blooming in all its voluptuous beauty, it lay before the ardent gaze of the King. Then starting forward, she flung the whole volume of her tresses back from her shoulders, she darted in the air, like a bird from its perch.

The music filled the hall.

Floating on those waves of sound, that lovely form undulated to and fro, with the dark eyes shooting their softened glance from the half-closed lids. The music swelled in higher peals. Then, she clasped her hands above her head, she came tripping from the shadowy corner of the hall, her dark hair waving over her shoulders like a robe, she came gliding on tip-toe, even to the couch of the King.

He beheld the warm bloom of her bosom, the slender outline of her waist, the voluptuous tracery of her limbs.

"Herodia!" he shouted. "You fire my blood, you madden my brain! Ask what you will—even the half of my kingdom—and it shall be thine!"

A murmur of admiration came from the lips of the guests.

She heeded him not, that beautiful woman, but darting into the air, she seemed to float there—above them—for a single moment, and then descended as gently as a dying bird, who falls with one faint flutter to the ground. She crouched there a moment, with her head sunk between her knees, her long dark hair trailing over the floor.

A silence, deep as death, prevailed throughout the hall.

Then starting up again, her bosom heaving, her eyes flashing, she flung her round arms aside from her form, as if to embrace the King. Fired by the sight, he sprang from his couch, he darted forward to clasp her to his heart, but in an instant she was gone.

Yes, in a far corner of the hall, trembling on tip-toe, like a bird on a bending bough, she clasped her hands in front of her form, drooped her head, and gazed upon him with upraised eyes.

"I can bear this no longer! Herodia—you will drive me mad! Hear me; before these birthday guests, I swear to give you, what you may ask, were it the crown I wear, the throne on which I sit as King!"

Like a feather blown by the wind, she glided over the floor, and knelt at his feet. Her hair covered her form like a dark mantle. He beheld her there, beautiful and passionate, he gloated over those dimly defined outlines, which indicated a form without parallel for that warm, voluptuous beauty, which fires the blood, while it darkens the reason.

All was silent. Resting on their bent arms, the guests watched this scene with parted lips.

"Herodia—you do not love me! You do not ask the gift which I am to bestow!"

She looked up to him, her dark eyes gleaming through her parted hair.

"One request, one only!"

"Your voice thrills, your eyes madden me!"

"Not the crown which encircles your brows, not the throne on which you sit as King, but something dearer than all; a gift that will delight mine inmost soul!"

"Herodia, there is a strange smile upon your face, a deep fire in your eyes. This gift—what is it—were it the life of my dearest friend it shall be thine!"

She pressed her soft hands within his own, and murmured in a low musical voice :

"Not the life of your dearest friend do I desire, O King, but the head of your darkest enemy!"

Then gently rising, as if unconscious of the action, she laid her round arms on his breast.

"You mean"—whispered the King in a husky voice, "the head of the Fanatic, who?"

"Would have torn me from your arms!" The tender witchery of her glance, as winding her arms about his neck, she gazed intently on his countenance, no words can paint.

The King seemed to hesitate, but suddenly the silence which prevailed along the hall was broken by a deafening shout. Priest, Senator, Sadducee, and Pharisee, Jew and Roman, all joined in the shout—

"The head of the Fanatic, the head of the Blasphemer!"

The King trembled; "He may be a Prophet, he!"

Gently she laid her form against his bosom, and wound his arm about her neck. Then her head fell backward, her burning eyes were upturned toward his face. That glance overwhelmed the soul of Herod with passion.

Turning suddenly, he called a deformed Nubian, whose tawny face was surmounted by a helmet of gold, to his side. A few whispered words from the King to his slave, and the Nubian left the hall.

At the same moment, the beautiful woman parted from the King's embrace, and with her tresses fluttering all around her, glided along the floor, her face turned towards Herod, while her eyes, warming with glances of passion, shone into his soul. Even as the King stood gazing upon her she was gone.

He passed his hands over his eyes, as if to assure himself that the scene which had just transpired, was not altogether a dream of his fancy.

But the warm bursts of admiration which resounded through the festival hall, as the guests discoursed on the beauty of Herodia, at once his neice, his sister-in-law, mistress and wife, roused him from his reverie.

"A libation!" he shouted, "to the most beautiful of women, a libation to Herodia!"

Not a goblet but was drained, not a voice but aided to swell the shout which celebrated the beauty of Herodia.

Scarce had that shout died away among the tall pillars of the hall, when she appeared again, between the parted curtains.

Not attired in purple, or damask or azure, but with a loose robe of stainless white, floating from her shoulders to the knees, she stood there, twining her dark tresses around her alabaster arms.

Flushed with dazzling beauty, she advanced a single step—when another sound was heard. It was the heavy foot-tramp of the Nubian. Tall and

muscular in his form of hideous strength, he came from the opposite side of the hall, holding aloft a salver of gold, with his uplifted arms. "A cry of surprise burst from the wedding guests.

There, in the centre of that plate of gold, a human head glared on the guests, its starting eyes yet fired with life, its quivering lips yet warm. From the severed veins the blood poured in a gurgling stream, over the massive plate. Noble in the brow, godlike in its outlines of intellect, it had not been severed from the soul, more than a few brief moments.

Herodia saw it; her eyes flashed, not with love, but with the fire of a tigress darting on her prey. From the tips of her small fingers, to her heart, she quivered with infernal delight. She sprang forward—look! She seized the plate of gold, she holds it overhead with her white round arms! Herod hides his face in his hands; the guests dart from their couches to the floor. She dances, this bewitching woman, her white robe fluttering in transparent folds about her form. Still she lifts the charger on high, still that ghastly head grins there, above her beautiful face.

The music swells—a song bursts from her lips. How her eyes fire, how warmly her bosom swells into light, how like a dark cloud, floating over a form of snow, her dark hair waves back from her shoulders!

Look! The blood has filled the charger, it trickles over the edge—ah, horror! It falls drop by drop over her white robes!

Her small foot beats the floor in that mad dance, while the blood whirls round her in a shower!

The guests are maddened by the sight; they seize their goblets. Wine, more wine! The King starts up, and drowns remorse in the red glory of the grape. Ha, ha! How they laugh, how they shout, how they yell! More wine; the king's voice rings the hoarse cry far along the hall.

Still that beautiful woman dances there, holding the bloody head above her head.

One by one, the maidens with instruments of music in their hand, pass from the hall. An immense goblet is brought, large as a warrior's helmet. It is filled with wine, thickened with a maddening drug. The Nubians—at a word from the King—retire. The colossal cup passes from lip to lip; they gather in a circle, the King and his guests. Their brains swim in mad delirium; shouts, the most terrible, from their incoherence, pervade the hall.

Still bounding along the marble floor, that frenzied woman urges her wild dance, her white robe spotted with drops of blood.

One by one the lights go out. Reeling in the fierce paroxysm of drunken madness, the guests fall to the floor. O, Grave Senator of Rome, where is your dignity now, O, Solemn Priest of Israel, where your religion? Groveling on the floor, they beat their clenched hands against the marble, muttering in their madness, the name of HERODIA.

By the faint gleam of the last light, there stands the maddened King,

flushed with wine and passion, his eyes fixed upon the whirling woman, who holds the bloody head above her waving hair.

The last light quivers—goes out—all is darkness! Yet you hear the beating of the woman's foot along the floor.

The Saducee, crawling over the floor, has torn yon curtain from the pillars. A blaze of red sunshine streams in upon the scene.

Look there—beyond the pillars—how beautiful! The Sea of Galilee, heaving in tremulous waves beneath the last warm glow of the setting sun. The Mountains, with night around their feet, and golden beams upon their brows. Behold yonder towering palms, how it darkens out upon the view, between your vision and the impurpled sky.

The city too, temple and dome, gloomy prison and wide-extending roofs, glowing in the last warm flush of the dying day

But here within the chamber, what do you behold? The King like a block of stone, gazing with folded arms and set eyes, upon that lovely form! Yes, lovely, though her warm bosom heaves into the sunset glow, from the pressure of white robes spotted with blood, lovely, though the grinning head, which her fair arms lifts aloft, rains its crimson shower over her dark flowing hair, lovely, though she bounds and glides, advances and retreats, whirls and springs, as though a Demon's heart beat in her breast.

And all the while her lips quiver tremulously, as she mutters a strange wild song of joy. Now she dances in that red sunlight; in its warm rays she seems to bound amidst encircling flames!

The King advances, he flings himself at her feet.

"Herodia, beautiful Herodia, turn thy dark eyes on me! Let my lips feel thy kiss; my bosom the pressure of thine! Behold—I have sacrificed this holy man to thee—nay, laugh not in mockery—for my heart tells me that he was a holy man! Herodia, I am mad with love of thee! Gird me to thy heart and let me die, pillowed on that bosom, veiled in that flowing hair!"

Heard you that clanging sound? She dashes the plate of gold on the marble floor. Saw you that whirling circle of blood? Behold the grinning head rolls like a football over the floor.

She kneels beside the king. Smiling in beaming loveliness, until her ivory teeth are revealed between her parted lips, she lays her soft hands on his shoulder. His livid face burns with gloating passion.

Ah—did you see that movement? Her white arm as it rose, half-veiled in her waving tresses. The last glow of red sunlight falls there where they kneel; not an inch of her form but is warmed in mild and rosy light. She gently inclines towards him, her bosom heaving beneath the bloody robe. Look—she leans forward to impress her burning kiss upon his lips, but in that moment—

Eighteen hundred years have not effaced the memory of that hour!

In that moment, when she is about to sink into the incestuous embrace

of Herod the King, her flushed face is changed to the hue of a corpse. Her eyes—burning with unholy light—are cold, glassy, dead, in their fixed glare. Her bosom is stilled into marble. Her hands pressing her lover's form, are stiffened into things of stone. She gazes fixedly over his shoulder, while her livid lips part in a hideous contortion.

As though the sight of one risen from the dead had blasted him, the King recoiled—shuddered—cringed away from her touch.

"Herodia! Speak to me—are you dying—ah, horror! Hideous worms will revel on that brow—ah! Herodia you are terrible to look upon! Murderess—away—I loathe you!"

She smiled—God of Mercy!—what a smile! A dead body smiling as you gaze upon it, ere the first falling cled patters down upon its face, could not have seemed more horrible.

She smiled, and extended her stiffened arm; "Do you not see Him?" she whispered in a husky tone, which curdled his blood.

"Who? I see no one?"—

She said no word, but sank like lead upon the floor

The Doom was upon her.

There, even as she was about to clasp the King to her embrace, there, at his very shoulder rose a Form, pale, livid, deathly, with flowing beard and dark eyes, that glowed like living coals.

The MURDERED PROPHET; she knew him; she heard that voice that spoke to her heart without a sound.

Those words may never be revealed to mortal ear. As the last ray of the setting sun fell over her prostrate form, she raised her awful countenance.

"Never to die! Never to grow old! Ever to feel the fire of passion burning in my veins—to be loved—worshipped—and not to love again! Never to die—oh, terrible vengeance! Never! Never! Never!"

These last words were uttered in a tone of overwhelming sadness.

Suddenly a wild light blazed from her glassy eyes. She darted to her feet, seized a dagger from the girdle of the King, bared her bosom and plunged the point into her heart.

No blood followed the wound, not a mark disturbed the smooth beauty of her bosom.

The dagger clattered upon the floor.

"*Never*," Oh God, when I have scorned, "*NEVER*!"

She sprang toward the pillars; she reached forth her arms, and bending over the parapet gazed down upon the dark waters of Galilee. It was a fearful descent; between her bosom and the waters, a wall of marble, extending from pillar to pillar, intervened.

"I will die, thus!" And she sprang upon the wall; she, the beautiful Herodia, gave her form to space; as she leaped she closed her eyes.

She opened them again; she stood upon the wall; the air into which she

had leaped, bore her up with invisible arms ; she was not permitted to taste the luxury of—Death.

She turned to the King again ; he fled howling from her look.

Then her shrill laugh rang on the air, and the arched ceiling gave back the echo of her voice—

“ NEVER ! NEVER ! NEVER ! ”

Deep and sonorous as the tones of a funeral bell, that word “ NEVER ! ” echoed far along the waters.

For a moment the Jewess paused. Her eyes gleaming with unnatural light, her cheek now pale as marble, and now flushed with crimson, she tossed her long dark hair aside from her brow, as though to welcome the cool night air, which now ruffled the ocean into innumerable tiny waves.

“ This is a strange story ! ” exclaimed the Priest, wiping the clammy moisture from his brow—“ Woman, know you not that it is blasphemous to speak thus of blessed Saint John the Baptist ! ”

“ Is it so ? And do the words of the poor Jewess—the dancer—stir your Catholic blood ? Then, behold ! From the darkness of Ages, I evoke that spirit of Incest and Murder, who never spared man in his hatred, or woman in his lust—RODERICK BORGIA.”

And while the night wore on, while the Priest listened with chilled blood, and the Preacher turned from side to side, looking for the welcome glimpse of a sail, the Jewess continued her strange narration.

The light of the rising moon imparted a deeper beauty to her countenance, as her voice, deep, clear and thrilling in its slightest tone, was borne along by the midnight breeze.

CHAPTER SEVENTEENTH.

THE WANDERING JEWESS.—SECOND ERA.—A. D. 1500, FLORENCE.—
ROME.—RODERICK BORGIA.

It was in Florence, in the dark age, when Roderick Borgia, under the name of Alexander the Sixth, disgraced the Papal Throne, by crimes of every dye, from the midnight murder to the incestuous bed.

The Plague was in Florence.

The highways were crowded with fugitives from the scene of disease ; the streets of the city were piled with dead. The churches were deserted, mass was said no longer ; the offices of religion were trodden under foot in the great Fear of the city.

Even the Monks whose vow was endurance and prayer, even the Priests whose duty was to admonish the living and perform the last sad offices for the dead, had fled the city.

One Brotherhood alone, a noble and self-sacrificing band, whose members had been gathered from the noblest families of Italy, combatted the Panic and the Plague.

It was the WHITE BROTHERHOOD. Their vow was not so much to swell solemn ceremonies of the mass, within the rolling arches of the chapel, or the vaulted roof of the cathedral, as to go boldly forth into the darkest avenues of the city, searching for misery to relieve, sickness to heal, starvation to feed, or nakedness to clothe.

Arrayed from head to foot in a white gown whose unspotted purity was emblematic of their merciful office, with a thick hood, concealing their features, even from the view of those they relieved, this brotherhood were seen at all hours of the day or night, winding along the darkest haunts of the city, in search of the great foe of human kind—the Plague.

This order, as we have said, comprised members of the noblest families of Italy. No one could take the vow, who had not tasted of the pleasures of this life, and grown sick of all the world could offer for their appetites. Therefore the brothers of the order, were men who had tasted the delight of love, the fiery pleasures of ambition, the maddening joy of battle.

The Abbot a man full six feet high, whose splendid form, the shapeless robe could not altogether conceal, had lost a young and lovely wife, five years ago, when he was only nineteen years of age. Stricken to the very heart with despair, and impressed with a sense of the sinfulness of human passion, he had taken the vow of brotherhood.

Many there were in Florence, who remembered his forehead, shaded by chestnut curls, his proud lips curving in scorn, or wreathing in smiles that won the hearts of men; but for five years, that face had not been seen by man or woman.

The fame of the ABBOT LORENZO, once Prince of the house of Lorini, rang through all Florence.

A singular order, composed of noble ladies, bore the name of the WHITE SISTERHOOD. Their duty was to relieve the wretched of their own sex. They were mostly widows of noble families, whose husbands had been cut off by sudden death. The Abbess only four years ago, was the boast and wonder of Florence, renowned for her beauty and stately bearing. A deep dark eye, a lip whose warm ruby indicated a nature formed for love, rich black hair flowing aside from swelling cheeks, whose alabaster hues, bloomed into carnation in the centre: a form of voluptuous beauty, lovely in the bosom, lithe and slender in the waist, bewitching in the full proportions of the figure, delicate in the hands and feet; such was the memory of the Countess HELENA which dwelt in the hearts of the Florentine nobility.

For four years all this loveliness had been hidden in the shapeless gown

of the *White Sisterhood*, distinguished from the attire of the *Brotherhood*, only by an additional cross upon the breast.

The sad story everybody knew : at the age of seventeen she lost her husband, noble and gentle as she was, by the assassin's knife. Her heart had loved once ; she never could love again. She became a sister, and then Abbess of the Order.

These orders, together, worked miracles of mercy, in the darkest hours of the Plague. No hut was too dark for them to enter, no sick bed too wretched for them to cheer.

The Abbess *HELENA* and the Abbot *LORENZO*, with their forms shrouded, and their faces veiled, many times stood side-by-side, in that time of peril. Their hands might encounter, yet still no earthly passion fired their blood. She often, in some dark hut, listened to his deep manly tones, he to her low toned melodious accents, yet still no pulsation of sensual feeling, throbbed in their subdued and conquered breasts. Dead to the world, they had known the love of the world, but desired no more its burning embrace.

The Plague continued to rage, and one autumnal day, Lorenzo was called through the streets of the deserted city, to perform the last offices for the noble Prince *Di Lorma*, and at the same time time, *Helena*, received a like summons to prepare for the grave, the dead body of his wife.

The lord and lady lay dead in separate halls, of their deserted palace.

In a dim old room, hung with thick purple curtains, and crowded with massive furniture, the Abbot *Lorenzo* bent down over the livid body of the dead Prince. Some straggling and faint rays of sunlight that found entrance through the closed hangings, revealed that manly face, covered with hideous spots of red, that muscular form, clad even yet, in the glittering robes of yesterday, but stiffened in death.

The Abbot looked around the deserted room, as if to assure himself that no human eye beheld him, and then dropping the cowl on his shoulders, knelt beside the dead man and prayed.

His noble face, appeared in the centre of the belt of sunlight, like the head of a saint encircled by a glory. The high brow, shaded by chesnut curls, the aquiline nose, the firm chin and manly lips, were revealed in warm and glowing light. There was youth on his face, and fire in his deep dark eyes, but the youth was subdued by religion, the fire chastened by the touch of Heaven.

As *Lorenzo* knelt in silence there, *Helena* in the next chamber, sadly contemplated the body of the dead wife.

Stretched on a pallet, placed in the light of a broad window, the body of the Princess—she had been beautiful only yesterday—clad as it was, in holiday attire was fearful to look upon. Starting eyes, blotched cheeks, swollen limbs, these marked the repulsive entrance of the Plague.

The Abbess knelt. As the room was somewhat warm, she cast her hood upon her shoulders, and a countenance remarkable for its lofty beauty,

lay open to the light. Her large dark eyes were raised to heaven, her pale face, glowed in each cheek with a soft and rosy flush; her lips, whose ripe surface, indicated the passion what had been a part of her nature, quivered in prayer.

The words of blessing lingered yet upon her lips, when a hand was laid on her shoulder.

The Abbess started with a faint cry of terror. She sprang to her feet. There, by her side, stood a tall female figure, clad in a loose mantle of dark purple, whose flowing outlines marked the voluptuous outlines of her shape. A pale face, sad and wild in its expression, gazed upon the Abbess with large dark eyes, that gleamed their steady light from beneath long and trembling lashes. Her dark hair, plainly parted, and gathered behind in a heavy mass, relieved the lofty beauty of her brow.

"What would you?" said the Abbess, as a strange fear crept over her soul.

"We resemble each other," said the Dark Woman, "Look yonder from window—behold the mob who clamor for my blood! They call me witch, sorceress! I do not fear the missiles which they have hurled against my breast, but I despise their insolence. You will change your attire for mine. Come, good lady, as we resemble each other so nearly, you will not refuse this slight favor!"

With a shudder, the Abbess Helena gazed on their forms, as reflected in a large mirror which hung opposite the window. The same height, the same form, the same face, only that a wilder beauty gleamed from the stranger's eyes, a more voluptuous loveliness swelled the outlines of her shape.

"Change my garment for years!" she exclaimed, gazing upon this strange woman with a thrill of awe—"What if I refuse?"

"Look," cried the dark woman, bending down over the body of the dead Princess, "Behold this plague-smitten corpse! Thus I clasp it to my form, thus I press its lips to mine! Now, tell me lady Abbess, what is there in heaven or earth, that I can fear?"

Chilled, terrified, thunderstruck, the Lady Helena slipped the white gown from her beautiful form, and at the same moment the stranger flung the purple mantle from her shoulders. In a moment they stood attired once more, the dark woman in the white gown, with the hood gathered over her face; the Abbess nervously clutching the mantle to her breast.

"Now, you will leave the Palace, lady!" said that deep voice, resounding from the depths of the hood. "The mob are there—behold them from the window—clamoring for my blood, but you they will not harm! Go forth kind lady; this palace is mine!"

Forgetting that her strange likeness to the unknown woman would expose her to peculiar danger, the Lady Helena, awed into submission by the sound of that voice, turned and left the Palace.

The Stranger, from the window, watched her progress through the frenzied mob, who, driven mad by fear of the Plague, roamed the streets, seeking vengeance on all whom their blind rage might suspect of sorcery, or the Poisoner's crime.

"Ah—she descends the great staircase of the Palace! The mob hail her with a shout! Look—a stone is thrown—another—they bear her to the earth! I see her bloody face upraised, her clasped hands uplifted! She pleads for mercy! Hark!—that cry! 'Death to the Sorceress—death to the Jewish minion!' Hah—can that trampled body, now urged towards the river's brink, by the rabble's feet, be the same on which I gazed, but a few moments since?"

"On what sight do you gaze so earnestly, Sister Helena?" said the voice of the Abbot, as he advanced to her side.

"Nay—do not look, good Brother!" she exclaimed, taking him earnestly by the hand. "It is but a poor Jewish maiden, accused of sorcery, whom the mob are trampling to death!"

The touch of that hand fired the Abbot to the heart. His whole frame felt the electric impulse, communicated by that soft white palm. Hastily he tore his fingers from the grasp of the supposed Sister, and gazed upon her veiled form in mute surprise.

"Nay—kind brother—do not tear your hand from my grasp! It is fevered, I know; I am ill I fear, with the Plague, and you do right to avoid me!"

"Avoid you, because you are ill, Sister Helena? How can you think so basely of me!"

"Ah—I faint—I fall—my senses wander—"

"It is not permitted us to gaze upon the unveiled face of a Sister, but we are enjoined to afford all proper aid, in case of sudden sickness. Sister, let me aid you to yonder couch!"

He gathered her form in his arms, even as she tottered towards him, but at the very instant that he felt the pressure of her bosom, warm and full, against his own, a terrible change passed over him. His heart beat in quick, irregular pulsations. His blood seemed to burn in his veins. His eyes swam in a hazy dimness; his whole being was changed. Passions that had been buried for years, under the strict discipline of self-denial and mortification, started suddenly into new and fearful life.

Trembling with excitement, he unwound her round arms from his neck, he tore her throbbing form from his bosom; almost rudely, he flung her on the sofa, and stood thunder-stricken and panting by her side.

She lay there, with the outlines of her voluptuous form disclosed by the folds of the Religious Robe. The hood was over her face, but he could see her bosom heaving beneath her snowy vestment.

"Ah—my reason fails me—I am departing from this world—pray for me, good Brother—ah—"

That prolonged sigh smote the very heart of Lorenzo. He knelt by her side; the first word of prayer trembled on his lips, when she slowly pushed the hood aside from her face. That countenance, lighted by dark eyes that glowed with supernatural fire, flushed with passion on each cheek, burning with love on the red lips, lay open to the gaze of the astonished Brother.

"Ah," she sighed, stretching forth her full round arms, "Why cannot Lorenzo love me?"

Her words, her look, her attitude of voluptuous languor, deprived the kneeling Abbot of all his religious self-control.

Even as he knelt, he bent forward, he flung his arms around her form, he—the miracle of self-denial—pressed his kiss to her warm lips, that seemed to burn with passion, as they returned his pressure.

But in a moment he recoiled; veiling his face—proud in its outlines of manly beauty—in his hands, he crouched on the floor, while deep sobs shook his bosom.

"Ah, what have I done! Broken my solemn vow, surrendered myself to the lusts of the flesh—O, Blasphemer that I am, I deserve to die! I am not fit to live!"

"But I have loved you Lorenzo," that soft voice melted into his soul, "Yes for three long years, I have buried in my breast the passion, which this day, has broken all the bonds, imposed by womanly modesty or conventual vows! Many a time, as I stood by your side in some dark hut, has my blood fired at the sound of your voice, many a time as I knelt with you in prayer, has my bosom swelled with passion, until I extended my arms to clasp you to my heart!"

"Ah, you are not the same Helena, I have known for years! Some evil spirit has changed you, and now I feel his transforming hand, upon my soul! Release me, Helena—do not tempt me further!"—

Even as he buried his face in his hands, she leaned from the velvet couch and wound her arms around his neck. Her touch was magic. In an instant all his doubts, his terrors, his remorse were gone. He gathered her to his heart, his kiss clung to her lips, bending her head backward, as she rested in his arms, he perused the wild dark beauty of her face. Her warm breath fanned his cheek.

"Let us live and love together, Lorenzo! Surely this one sin will be forgiven us, when Almighty Justice, beholds the many deeds of piety, we have done, in the miserable huts of the Plague-smitten city! To the eyes of the world, we will be the same pious, devoted, self-sacrificing Brother and Sister of the Order of Mercy! To each other we will be mistress and lover, husband and wife! Kisses shall be our prayers, our act of devotion, the warm embrace of love!"

"Helena! Your voice fills me with a strange delight, your eyes fire my blood!"—

"Ah, do not call me by the name, which is in the mouth of all the world! Call me by some name, which shall be sacred from all lips but yours——"

As she lay there, reclining gently in his arms, with passion darting from her eyes and breathing from her lips, he caught her fondly to his bosom once again.

"I will call you angel, for your presence makes this plague-poisoned chamber, Heaven!"

"Nay do not call me *Angel!*" she said with a sad and peculiar smile, "Call me by a name that will roll most softly from your lips——"

"That name"——

"HERODIA!"

As she spoke, a footstep broke on their ears. With one start they turned, even as she lay circled in his arms, with her long dark hair flowing over his hands. Both fired with the same passion, which flushed their cheeks and sparkled in their eyes, they started in wonder, to gaze upon the form of the intruder. He stood there looking silently upon this scene of passionate delight.

It was a BROTHER OF THE WHITE ROBE.

Lorenzo uttered a cry of agony. Their crime was sacrilege; the penalty was Death, and Death by the flames.

In a vaulted chamber of a convent in Rome, the solemn council were assembled for the trial of these renowned criminals.

It was at the dead hour of night, when their deliberations terminated. Not a circumstance that might add mystery and horror to the solemnities of that hour, was omitted or forgotten.

There, ranged on either side a man of striking countenance, clad in dark robes, glittering with a massy cross of gold, sat the Cardinal Princes of the church, their purple vestments, throwing their wan and venerable faces into bold relief.

A faint light, illumined their faces; it stood on a small altar on which was also placed an iron cross and skull.

That man of striking countenance, was Alexander the Sixth, the Pope. His cold dark eyes, shone with a meaning glare. His mouth, with sensual lips, almost buried, in the heavy wrinkles of his cheeks, worked in a peculiar smile. His forehead, stamped with the records of many a fearful deed, and encircled as with a coronet by scattered grey hairs, darkened in an ominous frown.

His cold dark eyes were fixed upon the criminals. There, beneath the vivid light of a silver lamp, suspended from the centre of the vault, at the distance of three yards they stood, the Abbot and his guilty companion. He, clad in his white robe, with the hood thrown from his brow, while his downcast face manifested in its compressed brow and fixed eyeballs, the stern agony of that hour. She, stripped of her robe, and clad in a slight

garment which left her white shoulders bare, and fell in loosened folds to her naked feet. Her uncovered arms, peculiar for their clear skin and round outlines, hung by her side. As she stood there, with her dark hair, falling in one thick mass over her right shoulder, her head erect and her large eye, flashing a calm scorn upon her judges, her whole appearance presented a strange contrast to the heart-broken look of her lover.

The gloating eye of the Pope, perused the details of her beauty, with a long and unwearied gaze. As he looked, the fulness of her bosom, increased by strong emotion, swelled her slight robe, and rose warmly into light.

"Lorenzo Di Lorini, once Abbot of the holy brotherhood of the white robe—" thus quivering from the purple lips of BORGIA the Pope, rang that stern decree along the lonely vault—"By the solemn resolve of this our extraordinary council, convened in the convent of the Blessed Virgin, thou art held guilty of the crime of sacrilege. It is our sentence, that ten days from the morrow, thou shalt with thy companion in guilt, once Abbess of of the white sisterhood be burned to death, in the most secret cell of this holy house. Thy punishment is secret, because the Church would be spared the scandal of thy crimes. Look for no mercy; anticipate no change, in this our solemn decree. By the Holy Trinity we swear, it shall be so!"

And the lascivious Borgia, who spared no man in his wrath, no woman in his lust, turned from the heart-broken Prince to the assisting Cardinals, they trembled at his look.

Then his gaze glowing not with love, nor yet with a baser passion, but with the incarnation of a wild beast's instinct, rested upon the beautiful face of the Lady Helena.

She, proudly towering in all her stature; crossed her arms over her full bosom, and smiled defiance in his face.

THE END.

